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# SEASONAL STORIES

EDITED BY  
ELSIE H. SPRIGGS

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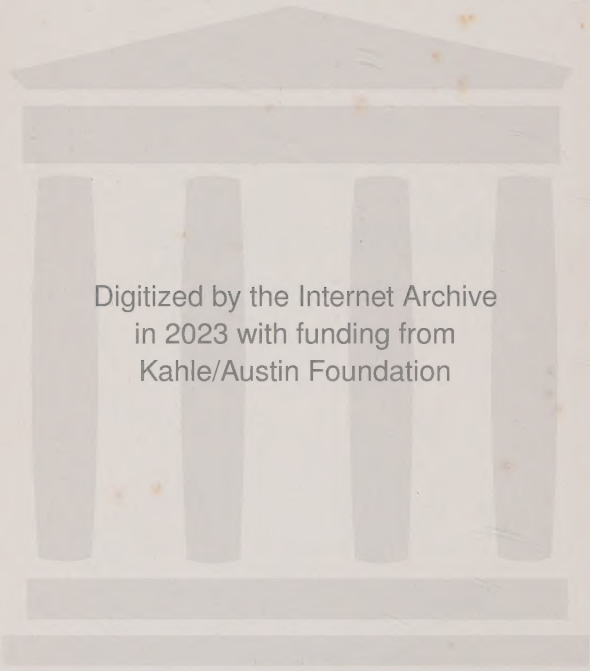
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SEASONAL STORIES



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# SEASONAL STORIES

A CLUSTER OF STORIES  
FOR PRIMARY CHILDREN

EDITED BY

ELSIE H. SPRIGGS

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THE NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION  
57 & 59 LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C. 4

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

THESE stories have been gathered together because through telling and re-telling they have proved of great delight and real educational value to children aged six to eight years. The selection of the stories has been made as comprehensive as possible, so that the special need for Extra - Biblical lessons for the Primary Course may be largely met, but the stories are equally suitable for use in the kindergarten and the home. The writers include those whose work is well known and widely appreciated.

Some of the stories have been specially written for this volume for festival days and seasons; a few have appeared in the *Primary Quarterly* and *Teachers and Taught* many years ago; while others were published in the annual handbook, *Primary Stories* and *More Primary Stories*—in all such cases the stories call for permanent use in work among children. The Editors of the publications referred to are hereby thanked for kind permission to include the stories here.



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\* Also suitable for Autumn and Harvest.

# SEASONAL STORIES

No. 1

## THE LITTLEST BULB

BY VERONA DORIS LESTER

ONCE upon a time there was a little brown bulb. For a long time she had lain, the littlest of all, with some sister bulbs in an old battered box in the front of a greengrocer's shop. Behind the box were piles of gleaming oranges, and others of tangerines, some of them in shining silver paper; apples were there, rosy-cheeked and gay, and curly green cabbages, but the bulbs were just a dull brown. "A dirty ugly brown," thought the littlest bulb, as she looked discontentedly around at her sisters. How she longed to wear a gay colour like those beautiful oranges, so fresh they looked, too, whilst she and her sisters were dry and dull.

Suddenly she felt herself being picked up out of her resting-place and thrust roughly into a bag with her sisters, and then she was carried away. It was quite dark in the bag, and she could not see where she was going, but when she was taken out she found herself in a tiny garden in front of a little red brick house.

The house looked gay, soft green curtains hung in the windows, and a yellow canary in a cage sang and trilled, so that for a moment the little brown bulb thought all the birds in the heavens were singing together. The littlest bulb thought she would like to lie there always, listening to that lovely music, and gazing at those lovely colours—green and yellow—

green and yellow. She looked at her sisters lying on the ground beside her, where they had been tumbled from the bag ; then she sighed, for they seemed so dull and ugly after looking at those beautiful colours—green and yellow—green and yellow.

Just then a little child ran out into the garden—a child with a green print dress and yellow curls. With her little hands she made a row of round holes in the ground, then carefully she placed the biggest bulb in one of the holes and buried her under the soft brown earth. The littlest bulb began to shiver with fear. To be shut away out of this lovely garden, with its yellow sunlight and its green trees, never again to see the homely little house with its soft green curtains and its yellow canary ! She felt she could not bear it.

Then the little child with the green print dress and yellow hair picked her up gently and began to whisper to her, and as the littlest bulb heard her words her trembling stopped, and she lay still, filled with a great wonder. " Little brown bulb, oh, little brown sister," said the child, " I'm going to put you to sleep now in the brown earth, and the sun will shine overhead, and the rain will come, and the days will pass, but God will take care of you all the while, and when the time comes He will send His sunbeam to call you, and you will wake and grow. Can you guess what you will be ? "

" Yellow and green—yellow and green . . ." Then she tenderly put the littlest bulb in the small round hole prepared for her, and as she covered her with soft brown earth, the last things the littlest bulb saw were her green print dress and yellow hair, and the last sound she heard was the singing of the canary, " Yell—yell—yell—yellow-o gr-e-e-e-en," he seemed to be singing at the very top of his voice ; then the littlest bulb saw and heard no more. For one moment she trembled, then she remembered the words of the little child, " God will be taking care of you all the while," and with a happy sigh she fell asleep.

Days and weeks went by, and still the littlest bulb lay sleeping. But one bright morning she awakened with a start. Something seemed to be calling ! What was



it the little child had said? "When the time comes He will send His sunbeams to call you." Then these warm, dancing lights must be God's sunbeam messengers sent to waken her. She stretched herself for sheer joy—then crack—up out of the ground she pushed! There before her was the little red house with the cool green curtains and the yellow canary singing with all its heart.

Suddenly she remembered some other words of the little child. Quickly she looked down at herself, and gave a gasp of joy; no longer was she a dull brown bulb, but a cool, slender, green shoot. She could have sung with the canary for pure joy.

Day by day she grew taller and taller, then a bud came, and one morning a beautiful yellow flower.

Then the little child came dancing down the garden with her green print dress and yellow hair.

"See," she cried, "was I not right? Green and yellow, green and yellow—my own beautiful daffodil."

And the yellow daffodil swayed gently on its green stem, dancing for very joy.

And the canary looked out into the garden and sang again, and his song seemed to the little daffodil to be, "Wake up! Wake up! Spring has come in the garden."

## HOW THE BUTTERFLY AWOKE

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

**I**T was a wrinkled little bramble-leaf who told me this story. And after she had told it to me, she told it to the brown path ; and the brown path told it to the green field ; and the green field told it to the green trees ; and the green trees told it to the sky ; and the wind in the sky told it to ALL THE WORLD ! So, before long, everybody knew the story told by the wrinkled little bramble-leaf. Perhaps you have heard it ? At any rate, here is the story :

A wrinkled little bramble-leaf grew on a long, prickly, straggling stem of a blackberry bush. When all the other leaves had been blown away, she still stayed on the long, prickly stem.

"Look at that blackberry leaf," cried the little boys and girls as they came along the brown path. But they did not pick her—she was much too prickly. And the bramble-leaf was very glad indeed that she was not picked. For, tucked away underneath her, so that they could not be seen, were two beautiful little cradles—made of the softest, finest silk, about half the size of your little finger.

"Whoo—oo !" sang the wind very gently. And the leaf rocked to and fro, so, of course, the cradles rocked as well.

"Tip-tap-tap," said the raindrops as they pattered on to the leaf. But as the cradles hung *underneath*, they were quite warm and dry.

"Nip-nip-nip," said Brother Frost. But the cradles were so beautifully covered up it did not matter! Not even Brother Frost could nip through silk!

"Ba—a!" said Woolly Sheep, as she came one day looking for green leaves to eat. She reached out for the bramble-leaf, but the leaf was much too prickly to eat.

"Oh, I am so thankful," sighed the leaf. "My precious cradles are still safe." So she curled her wrinkled little self around them, and felt so happy.

The days went by one by one—wet days, dry days, cold days, frosty days, snowy days, windy days! The bramble-leaf still hung on to her long, prickly stem. And tucked away underneath her were the two silken cradles.

"Oh, I do so wonder what the cradles hold!" said the leaf to herself. It was impossible to peep inside, for the silk was wound so tightly around the cradles that there wasn't even one chink. "I must not be impatient," said the leaf; "I must wait and see. Some day I am sure the little silk door will open."

So the wind rocked the cradles, and sang a song to them:

"Sleep, little people, whoever you are—  
Under the moon and the shining star."

And the bramble-leaf was very proud indeed to hold two silken cradles at once.

One day it began to get warm. The sunshine sent warm, golden fingers all in and out of the blackberry bush. The bush liked this very much indeed. She put out some pretty white blossoms and fresh green shoots.

"Ah!" said the wrinkled leaf to herself, "I'd rather hold these silken cradles than be a green shoot or little blossom." Suddenly she felt a little jerk! She looked, and saw a tiny door coming in the silken cradle. And, lo! another door in the other cradle as well.

Then slowly, very slowly, two wonderful little creatures crept out of the two silken doors. They had downy, velvet wings of brown and gold, with spots and bars. They came out very slowly and crawled on to the leaf.

"Oh! Oh!" said the leaf in a whisper. "Whatever can they be?"

Suddenly the brown-and-gold creatures stretched their wings and made them tremble in the air.

"Oh! Oh!" cried the leaf. "Whatever are they going to do?"

Then, very suddenly, they spread their wings and flew off into the sunshine.

"Come back, come back," cried the poor leaf, "come back."

The beautiful velvety creatures came back and settled on the leaf. They were the loveliest creatures you ever saw.

"Brown Path, Brown Path," cried the leaf eagerly. "Oh, do tell me what these lovely things are!"

"I cannot tell," said the Brown Path, "but I'll ask Green Field."

"Green Field, Green Field, what are these beautiful creatures?" asked the Brown Path.

"I cannot tell," said Green Field, "but I'll ask Green Tree."

"Green Tree, Green Tree," said Green Field, "what are these beautiful creatures?"

"I cannot tell," said Green Tree, "but I'll ask the Wind in the Sky."

"Wind in the Sky, Wind in the Sky, what are these beautiful creatures?" asked Green Tree.

Then the Wind in the Sky gave a great big shout of laughing. "Why, they are Butterflies," he said. "They have been sleeping in silken cradles on a little crinkled bramble-leaf. Now they are awake, dancing in the sunshine."

So Green Tree told Green Field. And Green Field told Brown Path. And Brown Path told the bramble-leaf in a big whisper—"Butterflies."

"Butterflies, Butterflies, Butterflies," said the bramble-leaf softly to herself. "To think I have been nursing butterflies in those silken cradles!"

Then, suddenly, the leaf remembered how two strange little brown grubs had paid her a visit one day. She remembered, too, how they stayed, and stayed, and

stayed. . . . They must have made these silken cradles, of course, weaving them round and round their bodies. Then they must have done all sorts of wonderful things in those cradles—growing velvety bodies and silken wings, with glorious colours on them. How very wonderful it all was!

The bramble-leaf peeped inside the silken cradles. They were quite empty. Up in the sunshine flew the butterflies—here, there, and everywhere.

“Never mind,” said the leaf to herself. “It isn’t everybody that can help two butterflies and hide them safely away from hurt and harm.”

So she dropped off the long, prickly stem, and went to sleep under the blackberry bush. The Brown Path told Green Field. Green Field told Green Tree. Green Tree told Wind in the Sky. And Wind in the Sky told everybody how the butterflies had awakened.

The blackberry bush put out new blossoms and leaves. The green field pushed up its daisies and buttercups. In the green tree a blackbird sang. In the windy sky little white clouds floated about.

And the butterflies, like velvet flowers on wings, fluttered and danced in the sunshine.

## HOW BROTHER SQUIRREL AWOKE

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

EVERYTHING was very quiet in the big Pine Wood. Sometimes the sun came creeping between the trunks of the trees. Then you fancied you were in church with the light stealing down the aisles. And when the wind began to whisper in the tops of the branches, it seemed as if the organ was playing a beautiful hymn. The ground was covered with pine-needles. They made a lovely soft, springy carpet to walk upon. Oh yes, it was very quiet in the big Pine Wood.

It was Mother Wood Pigeon who spoke first. She had been out in the ploughed fields looking for food, and she had discovered her mate, Father Wood Pigeon, sitting on a branch of a big pine tree. She ruffled her feathers and said, "It is time we saw Brother Squirrel again. He is sleeping a very long time." Father Wood Pigeon said, "Coo, coo, coo, perfectly true; I wish he was here, I do, I do."

"I shall go and look for him," said Mother Wood Pigeon. So she flew off into the thickest part of the wood.

Half-way up a big tree was a large hole filled with dry leaves. Mother Wood Pigeon put her soft little head on one side and looked into the hole. There was Brother Squirrel curled up in the very middle of the leaves. His bushy tail was curled around his body to keep him warm, and leaves were scattered over him. It was a very snug little bed. And Brother Squirrel was fast asleep.



Mother Pigeon spoke to him. "It is time you were awake, Little Brother," she said. "I saw the pink brushes of the larch yesterday in the next wood. And the yellow celandines are out in Farmer Green's meadow. Do wake up."

But Brother Squirrel never stirred.

So Mother Wood Pigeon went back to her mate. "It is no good," she said. "Little Brother is fast asleep in his bed of leaves. He will not wake up until the right time."

"What is the right time?" asked Father Wood Pigeon.

"Only Brother Squirrel knows that," Mother Wood Pigeon said. "The right time is always the best time, but I do wish he was here, for the wood is very lonely without him."

Then they flew off into another part of the wood where Mother Wood Pigeon had decided to build a nest.

The next day there came a Little Wind into the wood. He was rather shy, and didn't make very much noise. He seemed to come from nowhere, and yet he was everywhere. He shook the brown pine-needles down from the trees. He made a lovely song in the tops of the branches. Then he discovered Brother Squirrel fast asleep in his snug hole in the tree.

"Sh, sh, sh," said the Little Wind. He crept right into the hole and took away a few leaves. "It is time you were awake, Little Brother," he said. "I saw the daisy faces looking at me yesterday, and every one had their frills on. Do wake up."

But Brother Squirrel never stirred.

So Little Wind blew himself off to another part of the wood. He met another little wind and told him all about it. He said, "Brother Squirrel is fast asleep in his bed of leaves. He will not wake up until the right time."

"What is the right time?" asked the other little wind.

Little Wind gave a rustle. "Only Brother Squirrel knows that," he said.

"The right time is always the best time," he said, "but I do wish he was here, for the wood is very lonely without him."

So both winds blew themselves away, for they had other work to do.

The next day there came into the wood a lovely golden Sunbeam. He was a beautiful little thing. He crept in between the branches until he reached the tree of Brother Squirrel. He danced around the trunk for quite a long time, making pretty patterns everywhere. And wherever he danced the tree-trunk turned a most wonderful red-brown. Higher and higher he danced, until he managed to look right into the hole of Brother Squirrel. As he looked, the leaves all were turned to gold and red and brown. And the furry coat of Brother Squirrel was turned into red-brown as well.

Then Yellow Sunbeam got right into the hole. He danced around the hole. He laughed and twinkled and kissed and stroked. And when he had done that he began right over again. He was such a merry little fellow. The leaves over Brother Squirrel began to move ever so gently. Bit by bit Brother Squirrel twisted and turned until he was awake. But he didn't get up at once. Instead, he lay very quietly in his bed, blinking his eyes and twitching his tail.

Meanwhile, the sunbeam danced here, there, and everywhere. He peeped right into the eyes of Brother Squirrel. Then the magic began to work. Brother Squirrel was wide awake! Yes, very WIDE AWAKE! He stood up, gave himself a shake, then crept out of his hole. Sunbeam laughed like anything. The more he laughed and stroked and kissed, the more wide awake did Brother Squirrel become. Then at last Brother Squirrel managed to talk. He said:

"You always keep to time, Brother Sunbeam."

Brother Sunbeam liked to be called brother. He danced and said:

"I keep time for everybody. I keep spring-time, summer-time, autumn-time, and winter-time."

Brother Squirrel slid down the tree-trunk. He felt a bit wobbly at first. On the pine-needles carpet he felt

stronger. He scratched the needles away and found a sweet nut. He sat up with his bushy tail spread up behind him, and then he ate the nut. It was very nice. And all the while Sunbeam was dancing around him.

Then it was that Little Wind blew into the wood. He caught his breath when he saw Brother Squirrel. He was so surprised.

The Little Wind remembered that Sunbeam was part of God's great Sun Clock. He remembered that the great Sun Clock always kept the right time. Every watch and clock in the world was set by God's Sun Clock. The great Sun Clock never made a mistake. And Brother Squirrel woke up at the right time. He was awakened by the Sun Clock. Wonderful, wonderful !

There was a rustle in the pine tree above, and Mother and Father Wood Pigeon stood on a branch cooing to each other. "Coo, coo, look do," said Father Wood Pigeon.

On the carpet of pine-needles sat Brother Squirrel. He was eating another nut, and dancing around him was Sunbeam.

Then Mother Wood Pigeon remembered that Sunbeam was part of God's great Sun Clock. Brother Squirrel went by God's Sun Clock, and so got up at the right time. The Sun Clock never made a mistake, so Brother Squirrel couldn't make a mistake. Wonderful !

Brother Squirrel began to enjoy himself. Up and down the tree-trunks and along the branches went Brother Squirrel. He went more quickly every time. Sometimes it seemed as if he were flying. Whenever he sat on a branch, his beautiful sandy tail was spread up along his back. But whenever Brother Squirrel ran along the carpet of pine-needles his tail was laid flat. It was too heavy to carry up in the air.

"Glad to see you, Little Brother," cooed Mother Wood Pigeon.

"Coo, roo, roo ; glad to see you," said Father Wood Pigeon.

"Sh, sh, sh," said Little Wind ; "glad to see you again, Little Brother."

Brother Squirrel gave a hop and a skip and a jump. He was very glad to be awake. Of course, it was very cosy in the warm hole, but it was much nicer out in the wood. And friends were so kind—they were extremely kind.

“Thank you, thank you,” said Brother Squirrel—in his own talk, of course. “I am very glad to be awake. I shall see if I can find a little mate to live with me. It isn’t very nice to be alone.”

So Brother Squirrel chattered to himself as he ran up and down the trees in the Pine Wood. Hundreds of other sunbeams from the great Sun Clock were waking up the other squirrels in the wood, as well as the rest of the furry and hairy and spiky creatures. It was an exciting time.

No longer was it quiet in the wood. For wood pigeons cooed as they built their nests, and little winds blew themselves in the tops of the trees, singing their lovely songs as they passed. Now and then a shy bird would rustle the bushes near the edge of the wood, and everywhere were the squirrels. But Brother Squirrel was the happiest and busiest of all.

No. 4

## A SPRING SONG

BY VERA E. WALKER

THERE was once a little girl who went out very early in the morning to see what would happen.

As she left her mother's cottage by the shore the sky was all soft and silver-grey, for the sun had not yet risen. She passed out of the garden gate, and went down the little path by the cornfield, where the young green corn was growing. The wind went rustling through the leaf blades, and she could hear the corn singing, and these were the words of the song :

“ He that goeth forth bearing precious seed  
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,  
Bringing his sheaves with him.  
The valleys also shall stand so thick with corn  
That they shall laugh and sing.”

The little girl laughed for joy herself when she thought of the golden harvest that should wave there, and she ran at top speed down the path ; but midway she stopped quite still, for she heard a lark singing far away in the pearly sky.

“ Praise God, flying birds [sang the lark],  
Behold the birds of the air,  
They sow not, neither do they reap,  
And your Heavenly Father feedeth them.”

And with that she dropped to her hidden nest among the young corn.

Then the little girl ran again and came out of the cornfield, and began to climb the hill that led into the

dark wood. The wind was still blowing, and she heard the voices of the trees making music with their branches.

“ All the trees of the wood shall sing for joy [they sang],  
In them the birds of the heaven have their habitation ;  
They sing among the branches.”

And, sure enough, when the little girl looked up there was a nest with birds in it. She saw through the boughs the sky changing colour, and the first rays of light touched the soft grass and the springing flowers. The graceful wild hyacinths swayed on their slender green stalks, and a chorus of purple bells rang out these words :

“ Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ;  
They toil not, neither do they spin ;  
Yet Solomon, in all his glory,  
Was not arrayed like one of these ! ”

Then she came out of the wood and saw the sunrise, glorious to look at—red and gold and green and blue. No sound came from the sky, yet it sang too, and the little girl heard the words in her mind :

“ The heavens declare the glory of God :  
Day unto day uttereth speech.  
In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun,  
Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course.”

The sun rose, robed in clouds of gold and flame colour, and made his way swiftly through the skies, as she came out of the wood and ran down the other side of the hill and reached the shore.

She began to make her way over the shining sands in the direction of her mother's cottage. Something struck her foot as she went, and she stooped to pick up a rosy shell and hold it to her ear to listen to what it would say. Then the shell sang, as shells will, of the wonder and glory of the great sea, and of the millions of living creatures in its depths.

“ Yonder is the sea, great and wide,  
Wherein are creeping things innumerable.  
The Lord is a great God ;  
The sea is His, and He made it.”



With the shell still in her hand, the little girl danced up the pathway, calling out, "Oh, mother, the whole world is singing for joy, because it is spring! It is praising God because He made it." And the mother smiled, and poured out the porridge for breakfast, and together, with folded hands, they said this grace : \*

" God be thanked in all the earth,  
God be praised with joy and mirth,  
God be thanked of every man,  
And I thank God all I can."

---

\* Adapted from an old Thanksgiving used in the Middle Ages.

No. 5

## EASTER JOY

BY ALICE M. PULLEN

THERE was once a Mother, the loveliest Mother that ever was, and her Baby Boy was the happiest Baby, though His first cradle was a very strange one—a manger in a stable. As His Mother cared for Him and washed Him and fed Him and sang to Him, her heart was full of joy and thankfulness to God, and she prayed in her heart :

“Please, God, help me to teach Him to grow up happy and strong and good, that He may make other people happy and strong and good.”

“For,” she said to herself as she rocked Him to sleep on her knee, “that is what the shining angel whispered to me that day, before He was born, ‘He shall save people from wrongdoing and make them happy and strong and good.’ ”

As He grew old enough to trot round the house after her, she loved Him still more. She loved to hear His shouts of laughter and the sound of His pattering feet. Even when He was quite tiny He would try to help her. He couldn’t bear to see people cross or unhappy. He would always try to help any one in trouble.

“He *is* growing up happy and strong and good,” she would say to herself as she watched Him with love in her eyes. “He *is* making people happy and strong and good.”

As He grew older still, she loved to watch His gentle ways with the children who ran in and out of the home. He would nurse them and sing to them and play with

them. He would comfort them when they cried, and when they were cross or unhappy He would make them laugh. He would make wooden toys for them in His father's shop. They were always good when He was with them, and happy.

At last He grew to be a man, and left His home. And though His mother was sad to see Him go, yet she was glad too, for she knew He was going, wherever He went, to save people from wrongdoing and make them happy and strong and good, as the angel had said. Sometimes she got news of Him. He had made a blind man see, and a lame man walk. Ever so many had come to Him sad or ill and He had sent them away happy and well. And though she missed Him, she was glad—very, very glad—and loved Him more than ever.

Sometimes He came to see her, and her heart sang for joy, and she brought Him water for His tired feet, and food she had cooked herself, and He would smile His thanks to her. He did not need to say it in words. His eyes said all He wanted, and she understood, because she was His mother. Sometimes He brought some of His friends with Him, and because she loved Him so much she looked after them too. There was one friend He brought sometimes whose name was John—a special friend. And I think John knew how much she loved her Son, and how very badly she missed Him when He was away. And he would send her news, because he guessed how she longed to hear of her Son.

"He is well and strong and happy," he would say. "I think He must think of you often, because He seems specially gentle and understanding with mothers. There was a father and mother whose little girl died, and He came to the house and took her by the hand, and spoke to her and gave her back to her mother. In one village He came to there was a funeral of a boy, and the boy's mother was crying. 'Don't cry,' He said to her. Then He spoke to the boy, and the boy sat up, well and strong, and He gave him back to his mother."

When Mary heard this her heart was full of gladness, and she loved Him more than before. But one day there came sad news to the mother at home.

"He has gone up to Jerusalem, and it is not safe for Him there. It may be they will put Him to death."

When Mary heard that she said to herself, "I must go up to Jerusalem; perhaps I can take care of Him. I am His mother. I love Him better than any one else does. I may be able to keep Him safe, or, at least, do something for Him."

So she went up to the big city. But she could do nothing to help Him except be with Him. She heard His dear voice speak to her.

"John will take care of you as though he were your Son," He said.

And then He spoke to John, who was standing beside her.

"Take care of her, John, as though she were your own mother," He said.

Then darkness, like a soft blue curtain, hid Him from her sight. He died.

And John took her to his own home and tried to comfort her. Her heart was so sad she wanted to see no one except John. She wanted to remember the days when her Son was a tiny baby, and she nursed Him and washed Him and fed Him and sang to Him. She wanted to think of Him trotting around the house after her, with His shouts of laughter and His pattering feet. She thought of Him growing up helping her. She remembered her prayer for Him, and the angel's promise that He should save people from wrongdoing, and make them happy and strong and good. And now He was dead, and her heart was heavy with grief.

On the third day, John came in with shining eyes.

"What do you think?" he said. "He is not dead; He is alive."

Mary's heart beat fast. It *could* not be true! And then she remembered the little girl who died, whom He took by the hand and raised up to life again and gave back to her mother; and the boy whose funeral he had seen whom He spoke to, and made live again and gave back to his mother. And her heart beat faster. It *could* be true! He would come back to her.

I think after that she went out with John to the

house, where all the friends were gathered together, all talking about Him.

"We have seen Him," said two of the women who were there, their eyes shining with joy.

"And we have seen Him," said two men. "He came and walked along the road with us."

And then He came, and I think His eyes met His mother's and He smiled at her. He did not need to say anything in words. He knew she would understand because she was His mother. And she did. A joy, greater than any she had ever known, filled her heart—Easter Joy.

No. 6

## TRAVELLER'S JOY\*

BY VERA E. WALKER

ONCE upon a time there were four children, who lived in a house which had a garden. Their names were Mary, Harry, Adela, and Christopher. Now, these children loved their garden very much, and they loved the lanes and fields round about, and the birds and the insects and the little animals that live out of doors. There was one meadow they loved better than all the rest, for there grew wild violets, and primroses, and hundreds of cowslips all golden yellow. But in that meadow they were forbidden to go, for it belonged to a cross old man who had quarrelled with their father.

One day the children made up a beautiful game. They made it up out of two books about flowers and a fairy-tale, and they said that they would pretend to be the people in the books and the story. Harry was to be Root Gatherer, and he was to dig up their own little gardens and to plant the flowers. Adela was Weeding Woman, and she took out the weeds. Chris pretended to be the Dwarf in the fairy-tale, and helped everybody. But Mary called herself "Traveller's Joy," for it was her work to sow seeds in all kinds of wild out-of-the-way places—in the field and lanes and hedges—so that those who had no gardens of their own could enjoy them.

That was a lovely game. She took poppy seeds from the heads of the garden flowers and sowed them down by the old quarry, where hardly any flowers grew. Then, when they sprang up, there would be beautiful

\* From "Mary's Meadow," by Mrs Ewing.



double poppies as lovely as carnations, pink and rose colour and cream—some big and some small, and all beautiful to see.

Then she had a beautiful thought. She had some roots of a double cowslip flower, very precious, and she determined to sow these in the field that belonged to the cross old man. So one day she took her basket and scissors and roots and went out quietly, and began to dig and put them in. Suddenly a loud shout made her stand up and drop them. There stood the old man, dreadfully angry, scolding and storming.

"What are you doing stealing flowers from my garden?" he said.

And Mary said, "I was not stealing; I was giving you some"; but she could not make him listen, and she went away, crying bitterly.

Now the days passed on, and the winter came, and then the spring. The flowers that Mary had sown began to spring up in the hedges and lonely places, to be the joy of travellers and those that had no gardens. And in the meadow the double cowslips grew. But Mary could not see them.

Then one day a strange thing happened. Mary came into the library and found her father standing there, and the cross old man was there, but he was not cross any longer, and in his coat he was wearing—what do you think? Double cowslips from the meadow!

"Will you forgive me for being angry?" he said to Mary. And when she forgave him, he put into her hands a written paper, saying, "I've given the meadow to you, and it's yours. Some one told me how you had been playing 'Traveller's Joy,' and when I went into the meadow there were your double cowslips."

So now the meadow was Mary's: all the grass and the trees and the birds and the cowslips, and everything that grew there, and how glad she was! But she was more glad still that she had tried to bring joy to the travellers who passed by the old quarry, and the cross old man who was not cross any longer, but who became her friend.

After that day the old quarrel between him and her father was made up. And as the spring passed on into summer and more flowers came out—hawthorn, and wild roses, and iris—the children played in Mary's meadow with hearts full of gladness, for no one is so happy as those who try to make others happy, too !

No. 7

## THE WOMAN WHOSE GARDEN IT WAS

BY ALICE M. PULLEN

THERE was once a woman who had a garden. It was a small garden, but it was just as full of lovely flowers as ever it could be. There were yellow roses and white roses, red roses and pink roses. There were tall white lilies that filled the air with sweetness. There were dark red peonies and bright red poppies. There were purple and yellow pansies. and there were snapdragons, yellow and flame-coloured and deep, dark brownly orange. It was a beautiful garden though it was so small. But the woman whose garden it was scarcely noticed the colour of the flowers.

The birds sang, in the early morning and late at night, their very sweetest songs. They built their nests in the bushes, and taught their babies to fly from the branches down among the flowers. But the woman whose garden it was scarcely heard them and scarcely saw them.

The butterflies, brown and white and yellow, fluttered here and there among the flowers, sipping the honey, and chasing one another in the sunshine. The bees from the hives in the garden next door hummed busily as they flew from flower to flower, carrying pollen for the seed-babies, and taking honey for the honeycomb in return. But the woman whose garden it was scarcely noticed them at all.

The wind played with the trees and flowers, till even the tiniest pansy joined in the dance, and the sweet

scents of the garden were wafted over the garden wall and down the road. The sun hid himself behind one tall tree after another, throwing long shadows that crept slowly across the garden as the day passed. The softly falling rain pattered on the leaves, and filled each thirsty flower-cup, and found its way into each tiny crack in the sun-baked brown earth. But the woman whose garden it was saw nothing of all this.

Now, just outside the town there was a great big white house that had no garden at all. Inside it there lived a great many lonely old ladies who had no home of their own, and no grown-up sons and daughters to take care of them. Sometimes they were very sad, and sometimes they longed for little homes of their own with even a tiny bit of garden where they could watch the flowers grow and smell their sweetness.

One lonely old lady, with white hair and a tired, sad face, used to walk along the road very slowly leaning on her stick, just to look over the wall at the flowers that grew in the beautiful garden. She would stand and look at the roses—yellow and white and red and pink—at the tall white lilies that filled the air with sweetness, at the dark red peonies, and the bright red poppies, at the purple and yellow pansies, and at the snapdragons, yellow and flame-coloured and deep, dark brownly orange. She loved the birds and the butterflies and the bees, but it was the flowers she looked at most. But the woman whose garden it was never noticed her.

One day as she stood leaning on her stick, looking over the wall at the gay colours of the garden, the woman whose garden it was looked up and saw her. She said nothing at all, but when she saw her again the next day and again the next, she made up her mind to speak to her.

“What is it?” she said.

The lonely old lady looked a little frightened, but the longing in her heart was so great that she couldn't turn away.

“I used to have flowers like that in my garden when I had a little home of my own,” she said. “Now that

I am old and poor I have no home of my own and no garden. Would you give me just *one* flower to take back with me ? ”

The woman whose garden it was looked at her a minute and said nothing. Then she took her scissors and cut one beautiful red rose and handed it over the garden wall. The face of the lonely old lady lit up, and her eyes shone for gladness, as she turned to go down the road, back to the big house for lonely old people.

The next time she came to look at the flowers in the beautiful garden, the woman whose garden it was gave her one without asking. And each time that she came after that, she went away with a lovely flower and a heart full of joy.

But one day she did not turn away after taking her flower. She just stood there with a question in her eyes.

“What is it ? ” asked the woman whose garden it was.

The lonely old lady was glad to be asked.

“It’s the old lady who sleeps in the bed next to mine,” she said eagerly. “She always looks at my flower so longingly. Could I—do you think I might—will you——”

Before she could finish, the woman whose garden it was had taken her scissors and cut a second beautiful flower. And the lonely old lady went away with her heart singing for joy. After that for a long time it was two flowers that went into the big house for lonely old people.

Then one day there was another question in her eyes.

“What is it ? ” asked the woman whose garden it was. She was beginning to notice the flowers and the birds and the bees and the butterflies, so she noticed the unasked question. “What is it ? ” she said.

“It’s the other old ladies in the ward. They look at our two flowers so longingly. I was wishing they could have one each,” said the old lady.

The woman whose garden it was ran into the house to fetch a basket, and quickly she filled the basket with roses, red and pink and yellow and white, with lilies

that filled the air with sweetness, with dark red peonies and bright red poppies, with little pansies, purple and yellow, with snapdragons, yellow and flame-coloured and deep, dark brownly orange. And *how* the birds sang as she passed the basket over the wall.

"There," she said. "I didn't know. I didn't think. But I'll bring a basketful myself next time."

After that the woman whose garden it was went every week into the big house for lonely old people, with a basketful of colour and sweetness. And every time she went, the faces of the lonely old ladies lit up at the sight of her and her basket.

One day as she came to the old lady to whom she had first given a flower, she noticed a question in her eyes.

"What is it?" she asked.

"It's the old people in the other wards," the old lady said eagerly. "They know we have flowers in here, and they are wishing they could have flowers too."

At that the woman whose garden it was picked up her empty basket and went straight home. She picked and she picked and she picked all the roses, red and white and pink and yellow, the lilies that filled the air with their sweetness, the dark red peonies and the bright red poppies, the little pansies, purple and yellow, and the snapdragons, yellow and flame-coloured and deep, dark brownly orange, till there were only buds left.

"Those must stay till next time," she said, "or there won't be any for next time. But what shall I do? These won't be enough. I know what I'll do!"

And she hurried down the road to her neighbour's house where the beehives were.

"Please," she said, "will you spare some of your flowers?"

"Some of my flowers?" said her neighbour, surprised. "Whatever for? You've got a whole basketful there, and you've got a garden of your own."

"Yes," said the woman. "But, you see, it's for the lonely old people in the big white house. They've no homes of their own and no gardens, and they're *longing* for flowers. I haven't enough for them all. Then,

you know, there's another big house for lonely people in the next town. I suppose there's one in every town. And, oh, I haven't nearly enough flowers. *Do help.*"

So her neighbour got a basket and filled it full of colour and sweetness. And together they went to the big house.

"We must go and ask every one with a garden," they said to one another. "If everybody with gardens shared, then all the lonely old people and all the sick people in hospitals could have some, and then what gladness and rejoicing there would be!"

After that the woman whose garden it was spent every minute she could spare in going round asking people to share their flowers, and in carrying the basketfuls up to the big white house for lonely old people, until she died.

"Let us make a beautiful big wreath for her," said some of her friends and neighbours.

"I know what she would like better than a wreath," said one. "Instead, let us make a promise that we will go on sharing our flowers, and that we will go on with her work of filling the big house with colour and sweetness."

And they did.



## THE LITTLE OLD LADY AND HER APPLE TREE

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

THE Little Old Lady lived all by herself in a tiny house. At the back of the house was a tiny garden. And in the tiny garden was a tiny Apple Tree.

One day, when the Little Old Lady was watering her garden, she noticed that the Apple Tree had lots of tiny apples upon it. The Little Old Lady counted twenty apples. This was a big number for so tiny a tree. "When they are bigger and riper," said the Little Old Lady, "I shall pick them and put them on a nice straw bed in my attic. Then they will be useful in the days of winter." And the Little Old Lady laughed with joy.

As the days went by the apples grew bigger and bigger and riper and riper. They began to get rosy cheeks. And they were so heavy they began to hang down.

"Wonderful, wonderful," whispered the Little Old Lady. "When they are bigger and riper I shall pick them and put them on a nice straw bed in my attic. Then they will be useful in the days of winter."

The apples did their best to get bigger and riper. People used to ask to see the wonderful apples. The Little Old Lady was very proud of her apples. She would take people round to see them. And when they saw the tiny tree loaded with big, beautiful apples they used to sigh and say, "Well, I never did in all my life." This pleased the Little Old Lady. She liked to hear her apples praised.

"When they are bigger and riper," said the Little Old Lady, "I shall pick them and put them on a nice straw bed in my attic. Then they will be useful in the days of winter."

At last the day came when the Little Old Lady made up her mind to pick the twenty beautiful apples. Her hands shook as she felt the warm loveliness of them. She looked at them before she picked them. There was a little hymn she remembered singing in Sunday school when she was a little girl :

"The ripe fruits in the garden,  
He made them every one."

So, of course, she knew that God had made these lovely apples. And it was God who was giving her this fine present.

"The ripe fruits in the garden,  
He made them every one."

The Little Old Lady hummed the tune to herself. It was like saying "Thank you" to God. Then very carefully, very slowly, she began to pick the apples. One, two, three, four—what lovely colours they had! Five, six, seven, eight—and how round they were! Nine, ten, eleven, twelve—how strong they were hanging from their little stalks! Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen—they were sure to be sweet! Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty—there, they were all picked now!

"The ripe fruits in the garden,  
He made them every one."

The Little Old Lady stooped to pick up the basket of apples. It was quite a heavy basket. It would be rather difficult for an Old Lady to carry that basket up to her attic. "I shall leave them in the kitchen till to-morrow," said the Little Old Lady to herself. She placed them on the broad window-sill in her shining kitchen.

Just then there was the sound of wheels, and the trot, trot, trot of horses. The Little Old Lady peeped

out from between her window curtains. Just in front of her little house was a char-à-banc, and in the char-à-banc were lots of little children. The Little Old Lady loved children. She stood peeping at her window.

A kind-looking nurse opened the Little Old Lady's gate and came and knocked at the door. The Little Old Lady opened the door at once.

"Would you be so kind," said the nurse, "as to give my little family a big jug of water? They are terribly thirsty. We will take great care of the jug!"

The Little Old Lady soon filled a big jug with water. She took out two mugs as well. As the nurse took the jug from her she noticed that all the children were crippled. None of them could walk. There were coats and cushions propping many of them up in their seats. Some of them had white faces and tired eyes. "Dear, dear!" said the Little Old Lady in a troubled voice.

"There are twenty of us," went on the nurse. "Isn't that a big family?"

The Little Old Lady jumped. Twenty of them! Twenty children! Twenty . . . apples! Ah, yes, twenty apples! Twenty sad little children! Couldn't walk! Couldn't run about! Couldn't pick apples from trees! "Twenty, did you say?"

"Thank you very much," the nurse was saying. She gave the jug back to the Little Old Lady. The driver made a movement to go on. "Stop, please," said the Little Old Lady.

She almost ran into the shining kitchen. On the broad window-sill was the heavy basket of apples. The Little Old Lady picked up the basket and carried it out to the char-à-banc. The nurse stared at the Little Old Lady. The little crippled children watched with their big, round eyes. "There are twenty apples here," said the Little Old Lady. "Each little boy and girl can have one." She pushed the basket into the hands of the kind nurse.

"Hooray!" cried a feeble little voice.

"Hooray, hooray!" said another and another.

"You are indeed good," said the nurse. She climbed

up into the char-à-banc and gave a shining apple into the thin little white hand stretched out so eagerly. "Hooray!" said another little child. They all blew kisses to the Little Old Lady. Twenty children! An apple all round. Then the char-à-banc rolled away.

The Little Old Lady took in the empty basket. But her eyes were smiling. Twenty children! Twenty apples! She got out her knitting. Her face was full of happiness. Twenty children! Twenty apples! Twenty happy little hearts! No, more than twenty happy hearts. The driver looked happy. That made twenty-one. And the nurse. That made twenty-two. And herself. That made twenty-three.

And God was happy. Of course He was happy.

"The ripe fruits in the garden,  
He made them every one."

Twenty-four who were happy! God was happy too. That was the best of all!

No. 9

## HARVEST GOLD

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

**T**HERE were two brothers who lived in the land of Once-upon-a-Time. One brother was poor, so the neighbours around called him "Poor Brother." The other was rich, so the neighbours called him "Rich Brother."

Poor Brother lived in a small cottage in the middle of a big field. He was a farmer. Every morning he was up early. There was a great deal to do in the big field. For the earth had to be ploughed to make it soft and good. Then golden wheat had to be sown in the field. As the days went by, the tiny green blades of wheat would come up through the soil. God sent His sun to warm the wheat. And God sent His rain to give the wheat a drink.

In the autumn the field was a field of gold. First, it was pale gold. Then it was orange gold. Then it was brown gold.

But always it was gold in the autumn.

And Poor Brother would cut the wheat down and sell it. For wheat makes bread to feed hungry people.

Rich Brother lived in a big, fine house in the middle of beautiful gardens. Every morning he was up late. He didn't have work to do. And his purse was full of money—golden money.

Sometimes Rich Brother would count this golden money. It was very heavy. There were bags and bags of the golden money.

Rich Brother would spread it out on the table to count it. But he never could count it all. There was too much. So he would put it all back in the bags again.

Poor Brother often wished that he could give his friends

presents. And there were many little children in the village who were poor. Some of them hadn't enough to eat. Poor Brother said to himself, "Oh, how I wish I could give those little children things to make them happy!"

But he never could do this because he was poor.

The children loved Poor Brother all the same. They came to see him in his little house. And Poor Brother would allow them to pick the red poppies in the wheat. Or he would give them rosy apples from off his one apple tree.

Rich Brother gave rich presents to his friends. And the friends gave rich presents back again to Rich Brother.

He could always do this because he was rich.

But the little children never came to see Rich Brother. They were frightened of him. When they saw him coming they ran away.

And so the days went by.

One morning in the early autumn the sun shone down upon the field of Poor Brother and turned it into a field of gold.

When the wind passed through the wheat it looked like the waves of a golden sea.

"I shall cut it to-day," said Poor Brother. "It is Harvest Gold."

In his big house, Rich Brother was counting out his heavy golden money. When he counted till he was tired he put it away in the bags again. The sun could not shine on it there. The bags were hidden in a dark place.

In the village there were sad fathers and mothers.

The fathers looked miserable. And the mothers were crying. The little children were playing very quietly.

There was no bread in the village.

For a long time the people of that country had been very poor and unhappy. There had been a dreadful war. War always makes people sad and poor. And now things were worse than ever.

Then the mothers said, "We must have bread for our children."

Fathers talked about it together. Then one of them said: "I shall go to Rich Brother. He surely will have flour with which we can make bread for the children."

So the fathers went to Rich Brother.

Rich Brother had his golden money spread out on the table. He was counting it again. The fathers told him all about their trouble. But Rich Brother shook his head.

"I only have enough flour to make bread for myself," he said. Then he picked up some golden money. "Take this," he said, "and perhaps you may be able to buy flour for yourselves."

The fathers looked at one another. There was no flour to buy. The golden money was no good to them.

One father said, "Oh, Rich Brother, your gold is no good to us. We cannot make bread of your gold. It is flour we want. We cannot eat gold."

But Rich Brother just said, "I need the flour myself."

So the fathers had to go away. And as they were going back to the village a little girl met them and said, "Poor Brother has a lot of gold. He is very good. He gives us apples and flowers."

So the fathers climbed the hill to the field of Poor Brother. They might go and speak to Poor Brother and see what he could do. He might be able to tell them where to get bread.

Poor Brother was cutting down the golden wheat when the fathers came. The fathers stopped and stared at the wheat.

The little girl had said, "Poor Brother has a lot of gold." Here was the gold. It was quite true.

Poor Brother stopped cutting the wheat. He listened to the story the fathers told him. "The little children have no bread," said the unhappy fathers.

Then Poor Brother stretched his hands to the fathers. His face was full of joy. At last he could help!

"Here is the gold you want," he cried. "Take it and grind it into flour, and then make bread for yourselves and little ones. Take it now."

The fathers did not know what to say. It was almost too wonderful. Here was the gold that they could eat! And as they carried great bundles of the golden wheat down the hill into the village they sang for joy.

Poor Brother heard their song as he stood in his empty field. It filled him with a great happiness. He wanted to laugh and sing.



## HEDGEROW HARVEST

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

**I**T was harvest-time in the hedges. The berries of the hawthorn were dull red. The berries of the wild rose were bright red. The berries of the blackberry were black red. And the hazel-nuts were golden brown!

And when the sun shone on the hedges it seemed as if they were on fire!

Woodsy Peter saw the hedges and thought that they really were on fire. And this is what he did. He went up to the big hedge very softly and felt the blackberry leaves with the tip of his finger. But no—the leaves were just red leaves. There was no fire! So Woodsy Peter laughed for joy and called the leaves of the blackberry “God’s Fire.”

Woodsy Peter lived in a tiny cottage near the woods. He loved the woods. So everybody called him Woodsy Peter. And he loved the hedges. There were lots of things to see in the hedges.

In the spring the wood-sorrel grew there like fairy cups. The hawthorn put on her bridal dress and showered her loveliness everywhere. The blackberry showed herself with snowy blossoms. And the baby fingers of the ferns uncurled themselves to touch your hand.

Spring in the hedgerow!

In the summer the rose put out her pink and white sweetness. And the stars of the stitchwort peeped amongst the long grass.

Summer in the hedgerow!

In the autumn the berries glowed like fires ; and the leaves glowed like flames ; and a thousand baby seeds and fruits popped and rattled and rustled !

Harvest in the hedgerow !

In the middle of the village stood a little church. Every Sunday the bells would ring " Ding-dong, ding-dong." Boys and girls and grown-up people would go to church when the bells began to ring. Woodsy Peter went too.

He sat in the back pew and listened to the singing and the stories which the preacher told.

One Sunday the preacher asked the people to do something. He told them that harvest-time was near. He told them about the goodness of God, the Heavenly Father. Then he said, " Bring your gifts here next Sunday. Bring some of the beauty into our church. The fields and hedges are full of this beauty. Let us worship God by showing everybody His gifts."

Woodsy Peter made up his mind what to do. He would go to the hedgerow and bring some of those beautiful colours to the church. His gifts would be the most beautiful. Red hawthorn berries ! Bright red rose berries ! Black red blackberries ! Red, red leaves ! " God's Fires." Oh yes, that is what he would do.

Woodsy Peter would take those colours into the church.

So Woodsy Peter waited all the week. He wanted the treasures to be as fresh as possible. So he waited till Saturday before he went to the hedges.

Then on Saturday he went.

When he came to the hedges the sun was just setting. The hedge looked as if it was on fire.

Then Woodsy Peter put up his hand to pick a branch of berries. They were the berries of the rose—bright red.

Then it was that a little voice said, " Oh, Woodsy Peter, you would not take our harvest, would you ? " It was Dick, the hedge sparrow. Woodsy Peter drew back. " Why, no, little brother," he said. " Pray tell me what you mean."

Dick hopped near to Woodsy Peter. " The berries belong to *us*," he said. " And if you take them we shall have no harvest. They keep us alive during the cold days of autumn and winter. Be kind, Woodsy Peter."

Woodsy Peter smiled. "It is well, little brother," he said. "I shall never take your harvest."

Then Woodsy Peter caught hold of a cluster of nuts. They were golden brown. It was then that another little voice said, "Oh, Woodsy Peter, you would not take our harvest, would you?" It was Bushy, the squirrel.

Woodsy Peter drew back. "Why, no, little brother," he said. "Pray tell me what you mean."

Bushy came quite close to Woodsy Peter. "The nuts belong to *us*," he said. "And if you take them we shall have no harvest. They keep us alive during the cold days of autumn and winter. Be kind, Woodsy Peter."

Woodsy Peter smiled. "It is well, little brother," he said. "I shall never take your harvest."

Then Woodsy Peter began to think. There was more than one kind of harvest. There was the birds' harvest. There was the squirrels' harvest. He had no right to take their harvests!

Then what could he take?

He knew! God's Fires! Red, red, blackberry leaves! Colour harvest! He would take "God's Fires" into the church!

Then he picked the red leaves very gently. Nobody stopped him. They pricked his hands. Woodsy Peter did not mind. He went on till he had got a beautiful bunch.

Then he went back again to his little cottage.

The next morning was Sunday. The bells were ringing "Ding-dong, ding-dong." Woodsy Peter took his red leaves and went to church. Everybody was taking gifts to the altar. There were beautiful flowers. There were lovely fruits.

Woodsy Peter took his red leaves and put them on the altar.

The sun came in through the south window and touched the leaves. They glowed like fires! "God's Fires."

Woodsy Peter bowed his head.

Away in the hedgerow a little brown bird was singing his harvest song. Away in the hedgerow a little furry brother was saying his harvest prayer.

NO. II

## THE SOWER

BY ALICE M. PULLEN

REUBEN'S father was a farmer. He lived on a green hill that sloped down to the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee.

Reuben loved helping his father. There was always plenty to do.

Even before sowing time there were the oxen to feed, and water to be fetched for them from the well. Then the bare brown field must be cleared of stones, and the big lumps of earth broken up ready for the tiny seeds. No hard ground must be left, except where the little path of brown, beaten earth crossed the field, and where a cluster of prickly bushes spoiled one corner. Often there were errands for Reuben to do—a message to the carpenter about the wooden plough, or the yoke to be carried to the carpenter's shop to be mended.

When the work was done and Reuben was free to play, he would run down to the blue water and fish, or watch the fishermen mending their nets, or perhaps go out with them in the boats. Sometimes he would wander over the green hillside with the cool wind in his face and the songs of the birds in his ears.

One fresh spring day the field was ready for the sowing. The blue water below sparkled in the sunshine, and a strong clean wind blew across the lake. Reuben's father picked up the basket of tiny golden-brown seed, and Reuben followed him up to the top of the bare, brown field. Suddenly something down by the lake-side caught his eye. What was it? He shaded his

eyes with his hand. On the shore was a large crowd of people. Reuben raced down the hillside to find out what was happening.

Sunburnt fishermen, women on their way to the well with pitcher on head or shoulder, white-robed priests and soldiers in clanking armour, eager-eyed, bare-footed boys and girls, all were crowding round a man who was speaking. Reuben pushed his way through the crowd to the water's edge, but the man had moved away. The people had pressed forward so close to hear him, that he had climbed into a fishing-boat and pushed out a little way from the shore. Reuben could see his face quite clearly—a strong, kind face with shining, friendly eyes, that lit up as he began to tell them a story. Reuben loved stories. He knew the story of the Baby in the Bulrushes, and the story of David the Shepherd Boy, and many more. But this was quite a new one.

"One day a sower went out to sow." The story-teller pointed up the hill as he spoke. Reuben turned to see, and there was his own father with the basket of seed on his arm, striding across the bare field, flinging the corn in handfuls on the brown earth. Overhead the birds hovered watching with outspread wings, now and then flying down to snatch the precious seed as it fell.

"One day," said the story-teller, "a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them." Reuben's eyes were on those hovering birds above his father's head. "Some fell upon stony places where they had not much earth, and quickly they began to shoot up because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up, they were scorched and withered away." Reuben thought of the stones he had helped to clear away. "And some fell among thorns," went on the clear voice. "And as it grew the thorns choked it." Reuben could see from where he stood the prickly bushes at the corner of the field. "But some fell on good ground. The little roots pushed their way down into the brown earth, and the little green shoots pushed their way up through the brown earth and out into the sunshine. Taller and

taller they grew, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. The green turned yellow, the yellow deeper and deeper gold, till at last the harvesters came with their reaping-hooks and cut the tall, ripe, golden ears of corn, some thirtyfold, some fifty, and some a hundredfold."

As the story-teller ended, there was a stillness in the crowd. Only the lapping of the little waves upon the shore, the whisper of the wind, and the cry of the hovering birds could be heard. Reuben looked up at the hill that was now brown, and thought of the golden corn that would come from the tiny seeds, if only the hungry birds did not eat them all. He must go to keep guard over them, to clap his hands and shout and sing to drive the birds away. As the crowd broke up into small groups, some turning back into the little fishing town, some walking slowly away talking of the story and the story-teller, some clustering round him to ask questions, Reuben slipped through the people and ran up the hillside, singing a song of the corn.

"It is God who will make it grow," he thought; "but father must plough and sow, and I must drive the birds away."

Every day for some time Reuben watched over the brown earth, clapping his hands and shouting and singing to keep the birds away; then one day he saw tiny green shoots. Taller and taller they grew as the days passed by, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The green turned yellow, the yellow deeper and deeper gold. Out of each tiny grain planted came a tall stalk carrying not one but thirty grains, and some sixty, some even a hundred.

"Oh, Lord, how manifold are Thy works," said Reuben's father. "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men. To-morrow we will cut the corn, and then we will go up to the beautiful Temple at Jerusalem to give thanks to the Giver of sunshine and rain, who made the corn grow, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold."



## THE FEAST OF THE INGATHERING

BY ALICE M. PULLEN

REUBEN had watched the brown earth turn to softest, sweetest green. As the sun's warm rays and the gentle rain wakened the little seeds, tiny white roots stretched down into the earth, and thin green shoots reached up towards the sun. He had watched the young corn grow taller and taller, till the ears nodded and waved in the merry breeze. He had watched them turn from green to pale yellow and then to gold.

At last Reuben's father said, "To-morrow we will cut the corn," and sharpened his sickle. Reuben was out early to take his share in the work. The sun was very hot, but a fresh wind blew across the Sea of Galilee, making little white-capped waves. As his father cut the corn, Reuben helped to tie it into sheaves. It was hot, heavy work. Every now and again Reuben lifted his face to let the cool wind blow on it, and looked down on the blue water. Then he remembered the story he had heard by the lakeside, and bent again to his work. The sun was setting red gold in the evening sky when the last sheaf was tied. "Now," said Reuben's father, "choose the best and biggest sheaf to give to God, who made the corn to grow from each tiny grain, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold. And to-morrow we will set out for Jerusalem and carry it to the beautiful white-and-gold Temple."

Very early the next morning Reuben and his father were up, putting together the few things they would



want for the journey ; and before the sun was hot they set out, carrying the sheaf. The road was crowded with people, taking their harvest gifts to Jerusalem. As they went they sang :

“ I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the House of the Lord.  
Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.”

Each evening they camped, gathered sticks for a fire, cooked and ate their picnic supper. Each night they slept beneath the stars.

It was a wonderful journey. At last the road climbed up a hill, and there, crowning a hilltop, with a circle of hills round it, was the beautiful city, its roofs gleaming in the sunshine. Above all was the white-and-gold Temple, so dazzling that Reuben could scarcely bear to look. From the crowd came a burst of song, and Reuben joined in :

“ As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,  
So the Lord is round about His people for ever.”

Down the hill into the valley and then up the hill and through the city gates they went.

As they came near to the gate they burst into song again :

“ Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of Glory shall come in.”

People inside the city heard them and took up the song :

“ Who is the King of Glory ? ”

Reuben joined in the answer with all his might. How the voices rang out !

“ The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory ! ”

Through the city gates they went, and along the streets, crowded with people and with happy, laughing boys and girls. There was so much to look at, Reuben did not know which way to turn. At last they found lodgings, but Reuben could scarcely go to sleep ; he was longing for the morning.

He was wakened by a blast of silver trumpets.

"What is it?" he asked.

"It is the call to God's House, the white-and-gold Temple," said his father. The streets were already thronged with people, many carrying their sheaf of corn, brought as a thanksgiving gift to God who had made the corn grow from each tiny grain, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold. Reuben and his father joined them and went up into the Temple courts, past the great money-box into which people threw gifts as they passed, towards the Beautiful Gate. The air was sweet with incense, and the sound of music came from the worshippers inside.

"Praise ye the Lord,  
Ye that stand in the House of the Lord,  
In the courts of the House of our God.  
Praise ye the Lord, for the Lord is good :  
Sing praises unto His Name, for it is pleasant."

Joyfully Reuben followed his father up the steps and into the House of God. His heart beat fast as the white-robed priest took the sheaf of barley-corn that they had carried all the way from the harvest-field by the blue Sea of Galilee, and waved it before the Lord. And as Reuben remembered the little brown seed that had grown thirty times, sixty times, a hundred times as much, enough for every day all through the winter, all through planting time, all through growing time until the next harvest was ripe and ready to cut, his heart was full of glad thanksgiving, and he too sang :

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,  
For His mercy endureth for ever."

## AN OLIVE HARVEST IN PALESTINE

BY BERTHA M. KRALL

ONCE upon a time, in a village in the land of Palestine, there lived a boy called David and a little girl called Ruth. They lived with their father and mother in a white house on the slope of a green hill, where lovely wild flowers grew. David went to school, but Ruth was too little, and so she stayed at home and helped her mother to keep the house clean. Sometimes she swept the floor or watched the bread so that it should not burn. When David came home from school they usually went up on the hillside together to play, and David was very careful that Ruth did not fall. On the hills grew many trees, with beautiful silvery grey leaves that in summer-time were full of green fruit called olives.

Nearly every man in the village had an olive tree on the hill, and the fruit gave them food and oil during the winter. So when they went out on the hillside, David and Ruth looked for these trees to see if the berries were large and ripe ; then they would tell their mother about them when they returned home, and always David would end by saying, " Our tree is the biggest and strongest, and bears many berries ! "

One morning David said at breakfast, " To-day, when school is over, I shall go up the hill and climb our olive tree and pick some of the berries ; I am sure they must be ripe. "

" Oh, David, you must not do that, " said his father. " No one may touch any of the berries until the

messenger comes from the chief to tell us that harvest-time has come. Then you may climb the tree ; you will have a day's holiday from school, so that you can help to gather in the olives."

"A whole day's holiday!" cried David. "How lovely!" And little Ruth clapped her hands with delight.

"We must be very busy on harvest day," said mother, "because we may not gather any olives after that day."

"Why not?" asked David.

"Because the Law tells us that we should think of poor people who have no olive tree, and so what is left over after the harvest day is for them."

"How long will it be before the messenger comes?" inquired David after a while.

"He comes early in October, and the time is nearly here."

You can imagine how David counted the days. Ruth could not count yet, but every day David told her that harvest-time was a little nearer than yesterday, and she knew what that meant.

At last it was October. David watched during the whole of the first day for the messenger, but he did not come. "Will he come to-morrow?" he asked his mother many, many times during the day.

"Perhaps," said mother.

Next day David and some of the other boys from the village ran a long way down the road to wait for him, but still he did not come. But on the third day, when David woke in the morning, he heard a noise and a bustle in the village—what could it be? "Oh, I know!" cried David, and ran out into the street. Yes, there he was, the messenger everybody had been waiting for, talking to a group of men. David could see his father among them. He crept up to him and pulled his sleeve. "What does he say? May we pick the olives to-day?" How glad David was when father nodded his head.

Soon they were all ready, and set out to climb the hillside. David was allowed to carry the long sticks

that were used to beat the olives to the ground. At last they reached their tree, but before starting work mother took hold of David and said to him :

“ Now, David, remember what the Law says : When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the branches again ; it shall be for the stranger and for the fatherless and for the poor.”

David promised he would remember, and he did, for when evening came, there were quite a number of berries left on the branches for the poor.

Ruth helped her mother to gather the olives into sacks, and then father carried them down the hill. David did not feel tired a bit. “ What a grand day I have had,” he told every one. The family was very merry that evening, for the harvest had been good, and they knew there would be enough food and oil for them all, and some to spare for those that were hungry and came to them for help.

The next day all the people in the village went to the Synagogue Church to praise the Heavenly Father for the good harvest He had given them. Happily David sang with the others :

“ Praise the Lord ! While I live, I will sing praises unto my God, for His glory is great in heaven and in earth ! ”

## GOD'S HARVEST GIFTS

BY FANNY HINDLE

THE great harvest festival had just been held. The people had brought their gifts and sung their hymns of praise and thanksgiving, and now, after a week of joy and happiness, were returning to their homes.

An old man walked slowly down the hillside, stopping every now and then to shade his eyes and look out over the countryside. He saw the valleys, which were now bare, beginning to turn brown in the burning sun. Already great cracks were showing in the parched ground. The blue sky spread overhead—no white fleecy cloud to dim the glare of the sun—but the old man took off his hat and, closing his eyes, murmured softly, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

"No," he thought, "the harvest may sometimes fail in one corner of God's big world, but I have lived long enough to know that there is always abundance elsewhere. If only men would learn to live in peace and happiness, none being selfish, none being wasteful, there would be enough and to spare for all." So he went happily on his way until he came to his little home in the valley.

As he went about his work the thought of God's goodness was always with him, and at last he said, "I will sing a new song unto the Lord." Then he fell to wondering what things he should put into his song :

"Praise waiteth for Thee, O God,  
Oh, Thou that hearest prayer,  
Unto Thee shall all men come,"

were some of the words he sang.

The days passed. He was busy about the fields clearing and tidying everything up. Day after day the sun shone, and at last there was nothing more to do until the rain came. One morning, as the old man looked out over the valley, he saw a tiny white cloud in the sky. Eagerly he watched it, and presently it grew bigger and darker. Soon other clouds were rolling up, till all the sky was dark, and he knew the welcome rain was coming. Soon the big drops came splashing down faster and faster, refreshing the parched earth.

Day after day the rain fell, till the rivers and streams were full, and the ground was soft and ready for ploughing. It was hard work ploughing in the rain; often he was wet to the skin, but as he finished his day's work and went home to change his wet clothes and rest, he stopped at the door, thinking of God's goodness. Without the rain, he thought, the ground would have remained hard and dry; no soft furrows could have been made in which to sow the seed.

When all the furrows had been made, the seed was sown and warmly covered with the soft earth. Then the farmer waited, and as he waited, he thought again: "While the earth remaineth," etc., and before long the cold and the frost and the snow came and did their work in the fields.

After weeks of patient waiting the gentle spring rains came, warm and soft, sparkling in the sunshine, and in a few days the earth had put on a mantle of green. How quickly the shoots grew, and soon the corn was tall and strong. The trees put forth their leaves, and the flowers sprang up on every hand, and the time of the singing of birds was come. Then, indeed, the old man's thoughts made themselves into beautiful poetry, and he sang:

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it,  
Thou greatly enrichest it;  
The river of God is full of water;  
Thou providest them with corn, when Thou hast so prepared  
the earth;  
Thou waterest her furrows abundantly;  
Thou settlest the ridges thereof;  
Thou makest it soft with showers;



Thou blessest the springing thereof ;  
Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness."

So he added these words to his new song.

By this time the hills were clothed with green, and the shepherds called gaily to each other as they led their sheep to the rich pasture lands. He watched the lambs as they frisked about on the green hillside, and noticed how big and strong they were growing. How carefully the shepherd sought the greenest places and led them to the bubbling springs. "What would the sheep do without the rain to make the pastures fresh and green?" he thought, and once again the old promise came to his mind: "Whilst the earth remaineth," etc. Then he added two more lines to his song:

"And the hills are girded with joy,  
The pastures are clothed with flocks."

The days grew hotter, the corn waved in the glowing sun and began to turn golden. "Harvest-time will soon be here," he thought. "The valleys stand so thick with corn that even they are singing." As the reapers made ready for their work and carried the first barley sheaves to their little church to ask God's blessing, he added two new lines to his song:

"The valleys also are covered over with corn,  
They shout for joy, they also sing."

And now from morning until night every one was busy in the fields. First the barley, then the wheat were safely gathered. Later the grapes and the olives and the fruits were stored, and at last the people began to make ready for the great festival once more.

And as the old man thought how they would take their gifts and sing praises to God for His goodness to men, he finished his song with these words:

"God be merciful unto us and bless us,  
And cause His face to shine upon us ;  
Let the peoples praise Thee, O God ;  
Let all the peoples praise Thee.  
O let the nations be glad and sing for joy ;  
Let all the peoples praise Thee, O God.  
Let all the peoples praise Thee.  
The earth hath yielded her increase ;  
God, even our own God, shall bless us."

No. 15

## PICCOLA

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

EVERY little girl and boy knows the joy of hanging up their Christmas stockings. There is no feeling quite so nice as that early-morning feeling, when the stockings are full and knobbly ! And then, oh, joy, there is the running to show them to father and mother !

Christmas-time has many delights, but the delight of a surprise is the most wonderful of all.

Piccola thought so too. She was a little French girl. She lived in France, but she was very poor. She hadn't many clothes to wear, and the food she ate was very coarse and plain. Sometimes she hadn't any food at all.

But Piccola was a very happy child. Food and clothes are very nice and necessary, but they do not make you happy. It is love inside your heart that makes you happy.

Now, the story I am going to tell happened at Christmas-time. Piccola was very excited. She said to herself a hundred times a day, "I am sure that Santa Claus will remember little Piccola." When father and mother heard this they were very sad.

"I am out of work, so I have no gifts for little Piccola," said the father sadly.

"Alas, neither have I !" said mother. And both of them were very troubled. But Piccola was very happy. "Santa Claus will remember little Piccola," she said, with a smile. And although father and mother told Piccola how very poor they were, yet Piccola kept on

saying, "Santa Claus will remember me. He will never pass me by."

Father and mother were surprised to see the bright face of their little girl. "Santa Claus remembers all children on Christmas Day," said Piccola.

At last Christmas Eve came. Piccola went to her poor little room, took off her shoes, and put one little shoe on the window-sill for Santa Claus to fill. Little girls did things that way in Piccola's country. And the little shoe looked so sweet all by itself on the ledge.

"I know he will never pass me by," said Piccola softly. Then she shut her eyes and was soon fast asleep.

But father and mother felt very sad. They knew that there would be no gifts in the shoe. They were much too poor. But, oh, how they longed to fill that little waiting shoe with the most beautiful present in the world!

And little Piccola slept so peacefully all through the quiet night. And when the early morning light came creeping through the window, Piccola awoke. She rubbed her eyes, then sat up in bed. Ah yes, now she remembered everything. It was Christmas Day. Last night she had put her shoe out for the good Santa Claus to fill. She rubbed her eyes once again. She was quite awake now.

She slipped out of bed. It was very cold. But Piccola did not notice the cold. She picked up her shoe, and what do you think was there?

It was a most wonderful present. But if you tried to guess all day and all night, I am sure you could never do so. For there, tucked away in the shoe, was a tiny bird. It had flown in through the window right into the warm shoe. Poor little shivering bird!

Piccola was delighted. This was indeed a perfect present! She took up the shoe very carefully in her hands so as not to frighten the bird, and hurried into mother's room. Father and mother stared at Piccola when they saw her carrying the shoe.

"What is it?" they asked both together.

"Oh, look, look!" cried Piccola as she held out the shoe.

Father and mother peeped into the shoe, and there they saw a tiny bird.

"Santa Claus left it in the shoe for me," said little Piccola.

Father and mother looked at each other. They never said a word. They were full of joy to think that Piccola was so happy.

"It is cold and hungry," said Piccola. "I shall warm it and feed it," she said.

It was a happy Christmas morning for Piccola. She warmed the tiny thing by the fire, and fed it with crumbs. As the bird felt the heat and ate the food it got better. Piccola was delighted. Fancy such a lovely present coming to her in that little shoe!

When the little bird began to fly about and chirp its thanks, Piccola felt that there was nothing nicer in the whole wide world. Not many little girls would have wakened up that morning to see a bird in their shoe. Piccola was really very lucky.

And the little bird stayed with Piccola. It sang to her and chirped from morning until night.

Happy little bird! Happy, happy Piccola!

No. 16

## THE ANGELS' GIFT

BY ALICE M. PULLEN

THERE was once a boy whose name was Servan, who was always listening.

He lived by the sea, and when he was quite small, he would stop his games with the sea and the sand to listen. Sometimes in summer he just heard the whisper of the tiny waves lapping on the shore. Sometimes he heard the soft singing of the wind, sometimes the cry of the sea-birds; and if he kept very still, the birds came quite near, and then he heard the flap of their wings as they flew overhead.

In winter, when the cold winds were strong, there was such a noise on the shore that he could hear none of the tiny sounds at all, only the crash and thunder of the giant waves, the hiss of flying spray, and the roar and shriek and whistle of the icy wind. He loved to walk towards the woods, for there, if he listened, he could hear the drip, drip of the raindrops off the trees if it were wet, or the crackle of dry leaves under his feet if it were fine, or the flutter of wings of the little land-birds, and sometimes the song of a robin. When he heard a lovely sound, he said to himself, "Perhaps if I learn to listen well, I shall hear the voice of God Who made the birds."

Now *when* it was it happened I don't know. It may have been when he grew older, or it may have been when he was still a little boy, but one day he heard wonderful singing. "Perhaps it is the birds," he said, and he searched everywhere. But there were no birds to be seen. Suddenly he thought, "It must be

God's holy angels," and he bowed his head and worshipped. After that, as he grew older, he often heard the angels sing, specially when he was praying and listening for God's voice.

One morning he was praying, when again he thought he heard the angels sing. "The angels are singing down by the seashore," he said. He didn't open his eyes. He just finished his prayer, and then, keeping his eyes shut, he listened. Suddenly a thought came to him. It may have been God Who spoke to him in his thought just because he was listening. This was the sudden thought that came to him: "Perhaps if I go to the seashore I shall *see* the holy angels as well as hear their songs."

With heart full of wonder and excitement he went down to the seashore. The golden sunshine shimmered on the sea. Little waves curled over and splashed on the yellow sand at his feet. White clouds chased one another across the blue, blue sky. Big grey and white seagulls flapped their wings and screamed above him; and the cool sea-breeze blew straight in his face, bringing the fresh clean fragrance of the open sea. But there was no sign of the holy angels. "Perhaps if I listen I shall hear them singing again," he said to himself. So, standing with his bare feet on the cool, wet sand by the water's edge, with his eyes on the far-away line where blue sky met blue sea, he listened. At first he heard nothing at all. Then he thought he heard a little tiny cry.

"Can that be the holy angels singing?" he thought. But no, it didn't sound like the angels' song. Again he listened and again it came. "Perhaps it is the cry of the sea-birds," he thought, as they flapped past him on big, strong wings. But no, it was too tiny for the cry of sea-birds. Again he listened and again it came—a little, tiny, plaintive cry.

"Why, I believe it is the cry of a little baby!" he thought to himself, and at once he began to look along the shore. His quick eyes searched everywhere, till at last, sheltered by a big rock not far from the water's edge, he found . . . a mother nursing a tiny baby,

rocking him on her knee, trying to stop his crying. Servan came close to her, his heart full of wonder when he saw where the holy angels had led him, but because of the sound of the splashing waves and the whispering wind, she did not know he was there.

"What's the matter?" asked Servan gently, for she was crying too. At the sound of his voice she jumped up, startled, holding her baby tightly, and turned to run away. "Don't be afraid," said Servan. "What is the matter? Why are you crying?" Perhaps it was the gentle friendliness of his voice that comforted her and took away her fear. She looked into his face, and she looked down at her wee baby.

"I have no home," she said, "and I am ill. I may die, and who will look after my baby?"

"Nowhere to go? Oh," said Servan quickly, "come to my house; I will take care of you both. Come, now. Come quickly, and if you die, have no fear, I will look after your baby."

Just for one little minute she looked at him wondering, then she wrapped the baby safe and warm in her arms and went with Servan back to his home.

And as they went, Servan's heart sang for joy at the gift the angels had brought him, which he would never have had if he hadn't listened—the gift of a tiny baby.



No. 17

## NOEL

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

MARTIN, the shepherd, was all alone in his little hut on the mountain-side. The firelight flickered and danced on the rough walls. Martin liked to watch the flames playing. They made him think of little children having a game before going to bed.

Martin had no children. He lived alone in the little hut. But he knew what it was to care for little things. There were new woolly bundles to be looked after every spring. The baby lambs come in the spring, and Martin was mother and father to them all. They had their own mothers and fathers, of course, but Martin was an extra mother and father.

Martin loved his big family.

He knew them all by name. He would climb the steep mountain-side to look for a lost lamb. And he never rested until he had found it. Sometimes he had to swing himself from rock to rock. And sometimes he nearly fell trying to get to some venturesome little lamb who had got into a dangerous place.

But, to-night, Martin was resting. It was very cold outside, and snow was beginning to fall. Martin piled the logs on the fire. It was warm and cosy in the hut. He was glad he hadn't to go out. Some kind neighbour had left Christmas papers for Martin to look at. Martin picked up the papers and put his feet near the glowing logs. He was so tired, and this rest was beautiful. Outside, the wind was beginning to rise. It blew the snowflakes into soft heaps against the hut.

It covered up the mountain paths. It lay on the pine trees like cloud wrappings. But now and then there would be a minute of quiet. Then, up in the dark sky, there shone a bright star.

Martin shut his eyes and began to think. He loved to pretend. This was because he lived alone. And he used to pretend that he had somebody in the hut who loved him and called him Martin. He didn't quite know who that somebody was. Baby lambs were dear little things, but they could not talk and call him Martin. . . . Then, Martin would suddenly stop pretending.

This evening, as Martin was pretending, he stopped very suddenly. He sat up straight. Then he got up and went to the window and opened it. Martin listened. And he heard the sound of a lamb crying !

Martin listened again. Yes, there was the same cry ! It was the sound of a lamb crying. And yet—and yet . . .

Martin listened again. There it was—such a sad little cry. Martin frowned. He frowned because he was thinking. For Martin remembered that he had no lambs in his big family yet. It was Christmas-time, and baby lambs did not come until the early spring. But . . . yes . . . there it was again.

"It is a lamb crying," said Martin to himself.

He turned to the nail on the wall where the lantern hung. He took it down and saw to the light. Then he put on his cloak and hood and opened the door.

The wind blew the flakes of snow across the room. Martin shivered in his thick cloak. After all, wasn't it rather foolish to go out into the snow and wind on such a night ? What if he lost his way ? Every path was covered up with a garment of snow. Even the rocks were covered. And there was no moon.

Martin held on to the door-post. The wind shrieked and howled. The lantern nearly blew out.

Suddenly there was a minute of quiet. A star shone out in the dark sky. And the sound of a lamb crying came quite plainly to Martin's ears.

"I MUST go," said Martin. He shut the door behind him and turned towards the mountain.

As he passed the sheds where the sheep were, he looked in to see if one of the sheep, perhaps, had got out. But no, they were all there. And Bess, the sheep-dog, was guarding them. Martin held the lantern more firmly in his hand. His feet slipped on the snow. Then slowly he began to climb the mountain-side. He could not keep to the path. The path was gone. And as the wind tore around corners it nearly blew the lantern out.

Up, up, up, climbed Martin. Once again he heard the cry. It was near to him this time. Martin stopped near a big rock that jutted out across the path he was making. There—the cry was just behind the rock. Martin flashed his lantern around the corner.

Under the rock was a bundle in a red shawl. Martin set the lantern safely on a ledge and picked up the bundle.

It cried, this bundle in a red shawl.

And Martin could only look and look and look ! For the bundle in the red shawl was *a year-old baby boy !* No lost lamb, but a lost baby !

"And yet, ye *are* a lost lamb," whispered Martin, as he wrapped the red shawl more warmly around the boy.

The baby boy looked up at Martin. Then he looked at the lantern. Then he laughed ! Laughed !

Martin began to go back along the footsteps he had made coming up. It was much easier going back. Martin hugged the red bundle to his heart. Whose baby ? Whose baby ?

"Mine, mine ; I found him," said Martin to himself. But his heart ached. Of course somebody would come for this baby. Martin could not keep him. No little voice would learn to call him by name, "Martin . . . Martin !"

When Martin reached the hut and the firelight, he saw the baby boy more clearly. And there, tucked into the shawl, was a letter. Martin read the letter. It said : "*This is baby Noël. Please take care of him. Some day he will love you. Let him be your little son.*"

Then Martin cried out with joy.

His baby son—his baby son ! Noël—Noël—Noël !

Noël who would call him Martin ! Noël who would run about the hut laughing and playing ! Noël who would dance like the firelight ! His own baby !

Martin put more wood on the fire. He got some milk and made it warm. Then he fed baby Noël. And baby Noël laughed and crowed. Baby Noël put out his dimpled hands and tried to catch the pretty sparks that ran up the chimney.

Martin found a clothes-basket. He put blankets in it. Then he put Noël in the middle. "Bye-low, bye-low," sang Martin. And baby Noël went to sleep.

Martin got up and went to the window. The snow-flakes were piled against the sill. The wind howled around the hut. Suddenly, there was a minute of quiet ! A star shone out in the dark sky.

Noël ! Noël !

## THE PICTURE WINDOW

BY MARY ENTWISTLE

**I**N a little house quite near the broad, blue sea, lived Billy-boy. His father's name was Billy, and that was why mother called her son Billy-boy. Daddy Billy was a coast-guardsmen. He helped to guard the shores from any damage that bad storms might do. He watched carefully lest any ship should lose its way and be wrecked on the rocky coast.

Sometimes Billy-boy walked a little way with Daddy when he went out on guard. And with them both went Billy-boy's dog, Bonzo, to guard Billy-boy. Billy-boy's home was swept all day long by sweet sea-breezes, and as his playgrounds were the rock-pools and the sandy shore, he was as brown as a berry. He was as happy as he could be, and never lonely. For whenever he sailed his boat in the sea-pools, or made castles in the sand, Bonzo played with him.

Often Billy-boy hugged Bonzo and whispered in his ear, "Oh-you-are-the-nicest-sort-of-friend. Whatever should I do without you!" And Bonzo would bark to show how pleased he was. One day Bonzo showed what a very splendid friend he could be. Billy-boy had been playing all the morning on the rocks, among the slippery seaweed and the little sea-pools. He had been having a jolly game of "Let's pretend." He was the captain of a boat and Bonzo was a pirate. He was so busy protecting his boat from Bonzo that he did not see how near he had gone to the edge of a high rock.

All at once his foot slipped, and down he went into a

deep pool. The wetting did not hurt him a bit ; he was quite used to sea-water. But, half-way down the pool was a ledge of rock. As Billy-boy fell he struck the rock with his back, hurting it very much.

Bonzo plunged in after him and pulled him out quickly, but Billy-boy lay very still upon the sand. Clever Bonzo knew something must be wrong, so he rushed home as quickly as he could. "Come at once," he barked to Billy's father. So very soon Billy-boy was taken up in his father's strong arms and carried home. And when Billy-boy opened his eyes he saw Bonzo looking at him with his bright eyes.

"Good old Bonzo," he said sleepily, "*you are* a friend." But Billy-boy's back didn't get well. He lay in his little bed all through the long summer days very quiet and still. The sweet sea-breezes came in to speak to him, the curling waves breaking on the rocks called to him, but he could not play upon the sands. His sturdy brown legs couldn't run and his hands seemed too tired to play.

Bonzo helped all he could. He lay full length on the bed and licked lovingly at Billy-boy's hand every now and then. But Billy couldn't help feeling very tired of being quiet. Then one day the doctor, who often came to see him, said, "Billy-boy, we want to take you to a hospital where hurt backs like yours are made well and strong. You won't mind leaving Bonzo and mother, will you ?"

Now Billy *did* mind very much. The tears came into his eyes at the thought of leaving home. But just then he saw his mother's face ; she looked *very* sorrowful. And then he saw Bonzo, sitting as though he understood every word, looking sad too. "I won't make them miserable—no, I won't," he said to himself. Then out loud he said, in a very small voice, "I don't mind *very* much."

"That's a brave Billy-boy," said the doctor.

"Shall I come home soon ?" asked Billy.

"As soon as you are well," said the doctor. "Won't it be fun to run races again with Bonzo ?"

"Oh yes," said Billy. "Will the hospital really give me a strong back ?"



"Really and truly," said the doctor. "That's what hospitals are for."

"I know," said Billy-boy. "We hear all about hospitals at our Primary. We send flowers sometimes. Last hospital Sunday I took three brown eggs that my Cockletop laid."

The next day a big, long kind of a carriage came for Billy-boy, and after a good-bye hug for Bonzo, he and his mother went to the hospital. Billy-boy felt a little frightened as he was lifted out of the carriage. "Suppose I don't like it," he said to himself. "Suppose I feel lonely without Bonzo!" He did wish he hadn't got to say good-bye to mother.

And then, all at once, his frightened feelings all went.

As he waited in the great hall, he saw, high up in the staircase wall, a beautiful window. It was a picture window, glowing with red and green and purple glass. And from the picture the loving face of Jesus, the Friend of children, looked down at him. It seemed to Billy-boy as though Jesus was smiling at him, beckoning with His hand up the stairs as though He were saying, "I *am* glad you have come, Billy-boy. You will get quite well here."

Billy-boy smiled back at the pictured Jesus. "Look," he whispered to his mother. "The Friend of little children is here. He is going to make my back quite well." And he smiled at the nurse when she came to him, for he could not be afraid any more.

The next few weeks were very strange to Billy-boy. Many doctors and nurses came to look at his back, and he had to lie very still. Lots of other boys were in the hospital. They ran about and played, but he could only look at picture-books and scrap-books and things that he could hold in his hand.

But at last there came a day when the nurses moved him just a *little* bit. And then soon after he was moved a *little* bit more. And at last he was allowed to sit up! Then two weeks after *that* day the doctor said he might go home.

"You've been such a sensible little chap," they said.



" You weren't frightened at all, so you helped yourself to get better."

And the nurses said, " Billy-boy, you *have* been a good patient. We are quite sorry you're going."

Then Billy-boy's mother came, all smiles and gladness, and said that Bonzo and Daddy were waiting in the taxi outside. So Billy-boy was helped into his outdoor things and down the stairs. Then just as he was going through the big doors to the waiting taxi, he turned back. The sun was streaming through, making beautiful blue, red, and green lights upon the broad stairs. And amid the colours the pictured, kindly face of Jesus looked down upon Billy-boy. Billy-boy let go of mother's arm and drew himself up as straight as he could. " Thank you, Jesus," he said. " My back is all right, you see. I can walk. Thank you for being in the hospital and helping everybody. Thank you."

Outside came two short barks. " That's Bonzo," said Billy-boy, nodding to the pictured Jesus. " He's saying ' Thank you ' to you."

## SILVER BRAVE'S MUSIC

BY MARY ENTWISTLE

FAR away in China, Hu Yin Han lay in a little white cot in the big ward of the Mission Hospital. His leg was in a splint, and one eye and ear were covered with bandages. He had been lying there for many days, and he felt very tired of being ill. Sometimes bad pains came, and lying still was a very hard thing to do. But always when the pains were bad, Sister Nora seemed to know. He would look up through his misty tears and see her kind face bending over him. He would hear her say, "Is the pain so bad, Silver Brave?" Then she would do something wonderful with the bandages, or move the bedclothes until he was more comfortable, and the pain would go.

"I can't leave you, Silver Brave, until you smile," Sister Nora would say. She always called him Silver Brave, for that was the English meaning of his Chinese name. Then Yin Han would smile from among all his bandages, and Sister Nora would smile back.

Besides Sister Nora there were other nice things in the Mission Hospital that cheered Hu Yin Han. Sometimes his mother came to see him, and she always brought him a surprise when she came. Sometimes the surprise was a little sweet cake of bean flour wrapped up in thin rice paper. Once it was a little wooden man wheeling a little wooden barrow. Another day it was a paper full of sticks of kao—such a delicious and sticky sweet.

Then sometimes the other little boys in the ward

played with Yin Han and showed him their toys. Sometimes the doctor came to see him, and talked to him in Chinese. There were many things that helped to cheer Yin Han, but perhaps the very best and loveliest thing of all was the wonderful music that Sister Nora made on the little organ.

How Yin Han did love that music! And when Sister Nora sang, and all the little boys sang with her, Hu Yin Han tried to sing too:

"Jesus loves me! this I know."

One day when Yin Han was getting better, Sister Nora came to him. "Silver Brave," she said, "you have so many treasures since you came here that you want something to keep them in. I've brought you a treasure box." She gave him a tin box that once had held biscuits. Then she propped him up with pillows so that he could play with his toys.

Yin Han began putting them in his treasure box. There was a picture post card one of the boys had given him. He put that in flat at the bottom. Then came a gay red button he had picked up one day, long ago, in the street. Then the little wooden man and his barrow went in, an orange that Sister Nora had given him, a whistle made from bamboo was tucked in one corner. And right on top went his paper of sticky kao. Then he put on the lid; his treasures were all safe.

The very next day the doctor came again. When he had looked at Yin Han's leg he said, "You will soon be walking on two legs again."

Sister Nora said, "Then you *will* be a Silver Brave!"

"Oh!" said the doctor, with a smile, "he has been a 'brave' all along, hasn't he, Sister Nora?" And Yin Han felt so happy when the Sister said:

"Yes, indeed, he *has* been brave."

So quite soon he was lifted out of bed and dressed once again in his own blue coat. The splint was taken off, and he was tucked up in a long chair. Sister Nora put on a new eye bandage. "Isn't it a nice one?" she said. "Do you know, Silver Brave, a little English

girl made it. She sent it all the way to China, and here it is making your poor eye better."

Yin Han was *very* interested.

"What is the little English girl like?" he asked, and felt the eye bandage carefully with his fingers.

Sister Nora told him about the English boys and girls. She tried to tell him just what *you* all look like.

"I send my greetings to the little English children," said Yin Han gravely. "One day I will go and see them. When I have my two eyes and my two legs," he added.

Now all the days were happy ones, for Yin Han was fast getting well. The other children crowded round his chair. "What shall we play at?" they asked.

"We will play with my box," he said, and showed his treasures. Then he put his chop-sticks between the lid and the box, and placed a hymn-book on them. He put his sticks of white kao in a line in front. They looked *very* like the music keep on the organ. "Now," said Yin Han, "let's all sing." And they did:

"Jesus loves me! this I know."

Such sweet music they made. And Silver Brave sang as sweetly as any of them.

## CÆDMON'S SONG

BY J. ISABEL ARMFIELD

A WAY on the grassy hills a boy, Cædmon, was minding the cows. As he was walking over the hills he heard the wind blowing through the tall grasses, and the water babbling over the stones in the brook, and the waves of the great sea dashing against the cliffs. The sun was shining in a blue sky, and he was filled with joy. Everything around him was praising God, and a song of praise was in his heart, but somehow the words would not come.

When evening came, he led the cows back to their stable, shook up the fragrant hay for their beds, and so made them comfortable for the night. Then he went to the big house on the cliff, ruled over by Mother Hilda, where men and women lived who had special work to do for God—teaching, preaching, and caring for the sick. There, in a large hall, Cædmon had supper, with the other men. When supper was finished, a harp was passed round from one to another, and as each took the harp, he sang a song—a merry, joyous song. Nearer and nearer came the harp to Cædmon; it would soon be his turn to sing. He felt the song of joy and praise in his heart, as he thought of the wind blowing in the long grasses, and the water babbling over the stones in the brook, and the waves of the great sea dashing against the cliffs. Yes, the song was in his heart, but somehow he feared lest the words would not come. So, as the harp came near, thinking he could not sing, he left his place at the table and slipped, unnoticed, out of the great hall.

As he crossed the yard he looked up at the stars, shining brightly in the dark sky, and he heard the waves dashing against the cliffs. Silently he went into the stable; the cows were asleep, so he crept into a corner and made himself a bed among the fragrant hay. As he lay there half-asleep, he could still hear the waves dashing against the cliffs, and he thought of the hillside with the water babbling over the stones in the brook, and the wind blowing through the tall grasses, and he longed to sing aloud his song of praise to God, but still the words would not come.

Presently he fell asleep, and while he slept he dreamed a dream, and in his dream some one stood beside him and said, "Cædmon, sing some song to me."

He answered, "I cannot sing, Master; that was why I left the hall and came hither."

The other replied, "Yet must you sing to me."

"What shall I sing?" Cædmon asked.

"Sing the song that is in your heart," answered the other, "the song of praise to God, who made all things."

As he listened, the words came to his lips, and in his dream Cædmon sang the song that was in his heart, the song of praise to God, who made the wind blowing through the tall grasses, and the water babbling over the stones in the brook, and the waves of the great sea, dashing against the cliffs.

"O God, how wonderful are Thy works!  
In wisdom hast Thou made them all."

When he awoke in the morning he remembered his dream and told it to one of the men. "Let us go to Mother Hilda," said the man, "that you may sing your song to her."

Together they went to the great hall, and Cædmon sang to Mother Hilda the words of the song that was in his heart, the song he had sung in his dream. Then Mother Hilda and the men and women that were with her were filled with joy. They gave Cædmon a beautiful book, the Bible, and Cædmon learnt to read from it the stories of Jesus, and of the love of God, and as Cædmon read, he turned the stories into song, and the people

near and far learnt to sing them and to praise God better because of Cædmon's songs. Then they were written down, long, long years ago, so that you and I, and all, might sing the songs which Cædmon made—the songs of praise to God.



## HOW BROTHER ANGEL PRAISED GOD

BY VERA E. WALKER

**I**N the land of Italy many years ago there lived in the same house a number of men who called each other "Brother." They were dressed all alike, in white robes with long black cloaks over them. The Brothers spent all their time in study and in prayer that they might teach the people around them about God, about Jesus Christ.

Almost all day long the big house was filled with the sound of music and singing, for the Brothers praised God in their church almost every hour of the day. Many beautiful hymns they sang, and one of them was a hymn we sometimes sing in church :

"We praise Thee, O God : we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

All the earth doth worship Thee : the Father everlasting.

To Thee all angels cry aloud : the heavens and all the powers therein."

Now there were no printed books in those days, and each book had to be written by the Brothers themselves. So every day some of the Brothers sat down at their wooden desks and took pens and ink and paper and carefully copied out the hymns and prayers they needed. And besides writing the letters of the words, they painted beautiful little pictures on the books to remind them of Jesus and of those who had loved and served Him.

Sometimes they made the books more beautiful by painting the capital letters in blue and red and green and gold, and they painted flowers and birds and beasts and stars there too, to remind them of the wonderful world which God had made, and to help them to praise Him better.

Not all the Brothers did this. Some worked in the house and some in the garden—some studied in the library and some went out among the poor to help them. Some went out into the towns and villages to preach.

There was one Brother whose name was Giovanni, but he had another name, Angelico. You will know soon why he was called that. Brother Angel spent his time in painting the beautiful pictures in the prayer-books, and sometimes he painted pictures for the walls of his own church, and other churches.

Every day before he took up his paint-brush he would kneel down and ask God to help him to paint a picture that should make men praise and worship Him more. Then he would rise and take all his bright colours—blue and red and green, and the glowing gold he loved—and begin to paint.

Sometimes he painted pictures of Jesus when He was a little baby on His mother's knee, or when He went about doing good. Sometimes he painted His disciples, Peter and John and the others. Sometimes he painted the good people he knew. And very, very often he painted the most beautiful angels. For as Brother Angel sang the praise of God in the church—

“To Thee all angels cry aloud,”

he saw in his mind the angels of God praising Him with music and singing in the golden city of heaven. And so he painted them in robes of gold and blue and lilac and green and rose-colour against a golden background, each one singing or playing. The faces of the angels he made very joyful.

Now if any one interrupted Brother Angel as he painted, or spoke angrily to him, he was never cross or answered back. And if he had to tell any of the others

that they had done wrong, he did it so quietly and kindly that they were sorry at once.

"Brother Giovanni grows like the angels he paints," they would say as they watched him kneeling at his prayers or making something beautiful for the house.

Often great and rich men came to the Brother and asked him if he would paint pictures for them also. "I will gladly do it for you," he would answer, "if the Head Brother says I may." And the rich men thought to themselves, "They do well to call him Brother Angel."

Now all this happened a very long time ago, and the Brothers who lived in that house have died, and the sound of their music and singing has long since passed away.

But the pictures which Brother Angel painted still shine on the walls of the churches in Italy, and some are in France and even in England.

And at Christmas-time, when all the shops are bright with cards and presents, you can often see calendars with the copies of angel pictures which the Brother painted long ago. Over each of those pictures he said a prayer, asking that whoever looked at them should join in the song of the angels and praise God too.

## THE BUILDING OF ST. SOPHIA

BY VERA E. WALKER

THERE was once a great Emperor who determined to build a church which should be even more lovely and wonderful than Solomon's Temple, and he determined to build it all by himself. He did not think how he could please God by his gift, nor how he could best help the people to praise Him there. His heart was full of pride, and he only thought of how men would praise him for the wonderful building, and how God would thank him when he reached heaven. So he ordered it to be cried through the city, "Justinian, the Emperor, will build a church alone. Let no one offer gifts."

Day by day the church grew, its great pillars and high arches, its marble benches, the great dome, and the roof covered with gilded tiles. There were wonderful coloured pictures inlaid in the marble, angels with spread wings, the twelve Apostles, and one of Jesus throned and crowned. There were silver and gold in the church, and jewels—beautiful silver and gold, and jewels—beautiful curtains, and lamps that sparkled like rubies in the darkness. On the slab over the door by which people should come in were carved these words, "This church to God, Justinian, Emperor, gave."

Now far away in that city, in a little cottage by the sea, there lived a poor old widow, so lame that she could hardly ever get about, and so poor, she could only just keep herself alive. She had heard people talking, as

they passed her window, of the great church which was being built, but she did not hear the heralds crying, "Justinian, the Emperor, will build this church alone. Let no one offer gifts." She was ill in those days, and a little bird used to sit on her window and sing. It seemed to her that God had sent it, and she longed to offer Him some gift as a thanksgiving. But what had she to give?

One day, as she lay by the window, she saw the great oxen which pulled the carts full of heavy marble for the building of the Emperor's church struggling up the street. The oxen were dragging the marble from the ships which brought it to that great city from far lands to a place where it would be hewed into great square blocks for building. They looked thin and hungry. A beautiful thought came into Euphrasia's mind. She would help the oxen to pull better, and that should be her gift to God. So she took some straw from the poor thin mattress where she lay and held it out for the oxen to eat. The bed was harder to lie on after that, but her heart was happy. She had helped in praising God.

The great day came when the church was to be dedicated. A long procession moved through the streets—soldiers in polished armour, flag-bearers with crimson-and-golden banners, and in the centre, on a milk-white horse, the Emperor himself. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in," sang the choir inside. Back swung the silver doors, and in passed the Emperor and all his people.

Justinian looked proudly round the wonderful church, and then turned to the stone over the door. On it were written these words: "This church to God, Euphrasia, widow, gave!" The Emperor gave a cry of anger. The choir stopped their singing. The trembling sculptor came forward and fell at Justinian's feet. "Sir, those are not the words I carved," he said. "Who is Euphrasia?" asked the Emperor, and, turning to one beside him, "Go fetch her here to me," he said.

Into the great church there came Euphrasia in her

poor ragged dress, walking with a stick because of her lameness.

"Euphrasia," said the Emperor, "how dare you disobey my command that none should offer gifts for this church!"

"Why, it was nothing," she answered. "I did not know that you would be angry. I had been ill, and when God made me well again I wanted to offer Him a gift to show that I loved Him. So I gave some of the straw on which I lie to the oxen that pulled the marble from the ships. Sir, I did nothing more."

"Look!" said the Emperor, pointing. "Read above that door. Your gift was small, but it was a gift of love, and God has accepted it. Mine was a gift of pride, and God does not want it."

Then the great Emperor turned to the poor lame widow and said, "Euphrasia, may God help me to grow in love and goodness, so that in heaven I may praise Him with you."

## HOW BRIAN LEARNED TO SING PRAISES

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

IT was a lovely summer day, and Brian walked between father and mother along the road. The bells were ringing—"Ding-dong, come to church, come to church; ding-dong." Brian liked to hear the bells. They sounded so kind and sweet.

Presently father and mother and Brian were sitting in a pew in the big, quiet, beautiful church. Brian shut his eyes for a minute, and then began to watch the people. They all came in so quietly. And as they sat down they shut their eyes, and Brian knew they were talking to God. Brian looked at the organ; he looked at a big stained-glass window; he counted the lilies in the brass vase on the altar. Then he began to count the beautiful carved flowers on the pews, and feel the soft green cushions.

All of a sudden the organ began to play, and the people rose and began to sing a hymn. Brian got up too, but he did not sing. He did not want to sing; he just wanted to watch.

"Sing, Brian," whispered mother.

But Brian just stared in front of him. He knew the hymn quite well—at least, he knew the tune and some of the words: "*Praise, my soul, the King of heaven.*"

But Brian was too busy watching to sing. After that there was another hymn, but Brian didn't sing.

"Sing, Brian," whispered father.

But Brian was busy looking at the lilies.



There was still another hymn, but Brian did not sing this hymn either. When mother whispered to him, "Sing, Brian," Brian said quite crossly, "I don't *want* to sing." So mother did not say any more.

Then the minister began to talk, but Brian could not quite understand the sermon, so he shut his eyes just for a minute. . . .

"Sing, Brian," said a very little voice. Brian jumped, he was so startled. The lilies in the brass vase were talking to Brian. Brian understood them perfectly.

"I don't want to sing," said Brian.

"Oh," said a lily sadly, "what a pity! Everybody ought to sing in God's house. *I sing!*"

"What?" said Brian. "I didn't know that lilies sang!"

"Certainly we sing," said the lilies. "*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,*" sang the lilies all together sweetly.

Brian sat up very straight. He never felt so surprised before.

"*I sing too,*" said the stained-glass window. The sunlight made him look so lovely. Brian could not speak for a minute. He just stared at the picture of a shepherd caring for a little lamb.

"I didn't know windows sang," said Brian.

"Certainly we sing," said the windows all together. Then they sang: "*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.*"

Brian just looked. He could not speak.

"*I sing too,*" said the big organ. He began to sing in a far-away voice: "*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.*"

Brian had never heard anything so lovely before.

"*I sing too,*" said a little voice quite close to Brian. Brian saw a tiny carved flower on the pew, and knew it was talking to him. He touched the little flower very gently. . . . "*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,*" sang the little carved flower. Brian put out his hand again, but . . .

"Sing, Brian," whispered mother. Brian opened

his eyes with a start. Where was he? Ah, in church, of course! And there were the lilies and the stained-glass window and the organ, as well as the tiny carved flower. Brian jumped up as the organ began to play: "*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.*"

"I know it—I know it," said Brian in a whisper. He looked towards the lilies. *They* knew it, of course! He gazed at the stained-glass window—he knew it as well. And how beautifully the organ was singing it! And, yes, of course, the little carved flower in the pew was singing too.

Brian opened his mouth and began to sing: "*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.*"

People turned round to look at a happy little boy singing his praise song. Father and mother were so glad to see Brian singing. They did not know *why* Brian was singing so joyfully, but Brian knew. He knew that all the beautiful things in the church were praising God, and he felt as if he *must* sing as well.

The lilies were saying "*Thank you!*" for the sunshine; the window was saying "*Thank you!*" for its beautiful colours; the organ was saying "*Thank you!*" for its wonderful voice; and the tiny carved flower was saying "*Thank you!*" for the lovely wood out of which it was made. And Brian was saying "*Thank you!*" because he felt so happy; for he had mother and father and home and lovely things! So, of course, he was happy.

## BROTHER FRANCIS THE SINGER

BY VERA E. WALKER

**L**ONG ago in a far-off sunny country there lived a man who went to and fro among his countrymen with such a look of joy on his face that all men wondered at him. He seemed to have so little to make him happy. He had no home, but he wandered over hill and dale, from town to village, with only an old torn robe to cover him, with no shoes on his feet and no money in his purse. As for food, he had to beg for it, and often enough he went hungry. But he was full of joy, and his joy shone in his eyes and rang in his voice, and all men wondered at him. For he knew he was serving our Lord Jesus Christ, and he had only one wish in the world, and that was to tell others about Him, that they might love and serve Him better, and be full of joy—for Jesus came into the world to make all men good and glad.

The name of this man was Francis, and he and the others who went about with him always called each other "Brother," for they were true brothers to all the people they ever met. And as for Francis, why, he called all living things "Brother" and "Sister" too, for did not God our Father make and love them all?

Now as Francis and his brothers went along the road and through the villages they sang songs of praise for joy and thankfulness. And many a time they would call the people together and speak to them of God who made and gave this beautiful world to us, and of Jesus who came to make all men good and glad.

They called themselves "God's singers," because they sang of Him. But Francis, as he went about the country, found many other singers who praised God beside himself. Once as they walked through a wet and marshy place, they saw a great number of birds, sitting and singing among the bushes. "See," said Francis, "our sisters the birds are praising God; let us go among them and sing unto the Lord praises." So he and the brothers came and stood among the bushes and sang, and birds were silent and listened. After the brothers had finished, the birds took up their song again.

After that they came to a place where they rested in the shade of a fig tree. On a branch of the fig tree a grasshopper sat chirping. Francis held out his hand, and the grasshopper jumped on to it. "Sing, little Sister Grasshopper," he said, "and praise God who made you by your gladness." And the grasshopper sang louder than ever for joy.

"See the flowers," Francis would say as he walked in a garden; "they praise God by their beauty and their scent. Look at our Sister Water, how pure she is, how precious, how useful. She praises God also. Give thanks for our Brother Fire, for he is beautiful and strong and joyful, and lightens our darkness."

But most of all, Francis loved the sun, and called on his brothers to praise God every morning and sunrise because it gave the light by which they saw all things. And Francis made a song of praise which he called "The Hymn of the Sun," and he sang it in words like these :

"Praise unto Thee may all Thy creatures pay,  
First, Brother Sun, who gives us light of day.  
Praised by our Sister Moon be Thou, O Lord,  
By all the beauteous Stars of heaven adored.  
Praised by our Brother Wind, by Cloud and Air,  
Whose blessings all Thy happy creatures share.  
Praised by our Sister Water, pure and bright,  
By Brother Fire who makes our darkness light.  
By Sister Earth who gives to us and ours,  
Fruit and fair grass and many coloured flowers."

"But most of all," said Francis in his hymn, "let us praise God by our gentleness and our kindness, and

by being strong to endure any pain and trouble, if by doing so we may serve Him."

Now it happened that one day Francis was walking down the road that led from one city to another. He had been ill, and he felt the cold wind blowing on him, so he wrapped himself tightly in his cloak. Then, as he walked, he suddenly saw in front of him a poor man whose tattered clothes fluttered in the wind, and whose thin body shivered with cold. Very quickly Brother Francis ran towards him, and, unfastening his cloak, he held it out towards him, saying, "Take this, Brother, and wrap yourself in it, for your need is greater than mine."

So the poor man took the cloak, and Francis went on with the cold wind blowing on him and no cloak to keep him warm. And he felt the pain and the cold, but if you had seen his face, you would never have known it, for a smile was on his lips and in his eyes the light of a great joy. Was there a song of praise made for God that day?

No. 25

## BROTHER FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

BY VERA E. WALKER

**I**N the town of Gubbio, where Francis was staying, there was great trouble and fear. A huge, grey wolf lived out on the hills near the city, and not only did he cruelly kill cattle and sheep and other animals, but he even attacked children and women and strong men, so that every man went out of the city armed as if for a fight. So great was the fear of the wolf that the time came when no one dare go out at all.

Now Francis was sorry for the people when he knew their trouble, and he determined to go out himself and meet the wolf. In vain the people pleaded with him, begging him not to go. "For," said they, "you will never come back alive." But when they saw he was determined, a great crowd went with him a little way out of the gates, to watch what happened.

As Francis came near to his den the great grey wolf rushed out on him, with fierce eyes and open jaws, his white teeth gleaming. But Francis, making the sign of the holy cross, called to him, saying, "Come here, Brother Wolf. I command you not to hurt me or any man." Even as he spoke, the wolf stopped, closed his jaws, and then trotted up to him like a great dog.

"Brother Wolf," said Francis, as the wolf lay down at his feet, "you have done many wicked things in these parts, slaying and eating God's creatures without His leave, and not only have you killed animals, but

men, made in the image of God, and for this you are worthy to die as a murderer. But now, Brother Wolf, I would make peace between you and the people of this city, so that you shall not injure them any more, and neither man nor dog shall hurt you."

The grey wolf pricked up his ears as he heard this, and wagged his tail.

Then Francis said, "It was because of hunger that you did these wicked things, Brother Wolf. But now if you promise to make peace I promise that the people of the city shall feed you so that you shall be hungry no more."

Here the wolf bowed his great grey head.

"Show me now that you will keep your promise," said Francis, and with that he put out his hand. And the wolf lifted his great grey paw and laid it gently in Francis's hand.

Then Francis stood up and said, "Brother Wolf, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come with me and fear nothing."

So, side by side they went into the city, Brother Francis in his old brown robe, and the great grey wolf trotting beside him like a tame lamb, and all the folk gathered to the market-place to see them.

Then Francis called to them, and said, "Brother Wolf has made his promise that he will never do harm to you any more if you will give him his daily food. Do you promise this?" And all the people promised.

Francis then turned to the wolf and said, "Come now, Brother Wolf, show them that you also make a promise." And with that he stooped and held out his hand, and the wolf laid his great grey paw gently in the hand, and so he made his peace with the people of Gubbio.

For two years after that the grey wolf lived, and every day he came to the city for his food. He wandered from door to door, and the people fed him kindly, and patted his grey, shaggy head; the little children did not fear him; and even the dogs did not bark at him as he passed by.

After he died, the people mourned for him as if they



had truly lost a brother, for they had grown to love him. Besides that, whenever the old grey wolf went by, they used to remember the kindness and gentleness of Brother Francis, and his love of our Father in Heaven, and of every living creature He has made.

No. 26

## BROTHER FRANCIS AND THE LAMBS

BY VERA E. WALKER

THERE are many stories which tell of the kindness of Brother Francis to all living creatures, besides the one we have heard. We remember how he tamed the savage wolf at Gubbio. And we remember, too, how all the animals and birds loved him, and obeyed him, and tried to make him happy, each in their own way.

Now Francis loved all living creatures, but above all he loved those that were gentle by nature, especially the lambs. For he remembered that our Lord Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd, and that He is also called the Lamb of God.

No less did the lambs love Francis when they met him. There was a day when he was journeying towards a certain city, and he chanced to pass through a green meadow where a great flock of sheep were feeding, and their shepherds were with them.

When Francis saw them his heart was full of gladness and he called out a greeting to them, and at the sound of his voice the whole flock stopped feeding and raised their heads and then ran to meet him bleating for joy, and surrounded him there on the green grass, looking at him without fear. And all the shepherds wondered.

At another time he was in a house where other Brothers lived together working in the fields for their bread and praising God in the church every day. One day one of the Brothers brought a lamb to him, knowing

how he loved them. And Francis took the lamb in his arms and stroked it, and told it to praise God by its gentleness and not to disturb the Brothers at their prayers. Then he set it down on its feet.

No sooner did the lamb hear the sound of singing in the church hard by than it walked with Brother Francis to the door quietly and kneeled down, as sheep will, and stayed there till the service was over. "See," said the Brothers, "how the lamb praises God!" And after that it was allowed to be in the house and to follow the Brothers about and go into the church whenever it would.

Again when Francis was out of doors he saw a white lamb among a flock of goats, and he longed for it, but he had no money with which to buy it. But a merchant passing by and seeing him looking at it, bought it for him. And Francis took the lamb in his arms and carried it to a house where he knew it would be loved and cared for.

When he passed by again and rested at that house the woman brought him a soft new cloak woven from the lamb's wool!

More beautiful than any of these tales is the story of how Francis was once walking down the road when he heard in the distance a sound of sad crying, and saw a boy carrying some little lambs, bound to a stick, going perhaps to die. There was only one thing that came to his mind then, and that was the vision of Him Who was called the Lamb of God going on His road to a cruel death.

"Why do you carry my little brothers, the lambs, hanging from a stick and crying?" he asked. He had no money with which to buy the lambs, but he had an old cloak to keep the wind from him, and this he gave in exchange. Away down the road he went again, carrying the lambs in his arms.

The wind was cold, but he was glad to suffer that he might save them from cruel hands. For he was a follower of Jesus Who loved all mankind and all the creatures of God, and Who bore pain that He might help us and have mercy on us all.

No. 27

## BROTHER FRANCIS AND THE BIRDS

BY VERA E. WALKER

WHEN Brother Francis was alive, he did not only talk to the people and tell them to love God and all His greatness, but, as you remember, he showed them an example, for he was always ready to help any one who was in need, and he would give away his last piece of bread and his only cloak, if ever he met any one who had need of them. So it was that all those who knew him loved him, because he first loved them.

Not only people but all living creatures loved Francis. For he called the lambs in the field and the birds in the trees, the little brown hares in the wood and the fish in the sea, his brothers and sisters too.

"Look," said Brother Francis to another Brother who was with him one day. "Look at my sisters the larks! They are dressed in brown robes as we are, and they gather their food by the wayside as God gives it to them, as we do. See, too, how they fly high up into the sky, singing praises to God Who made them."

And the brown larks, who were near, did not fly away when Francis came close—it was as if they knew truly that he was their Brother.

One day, as Brother Francis was walking along a certain road, he heard far off the sound of the cooing of doves. And, looking up, he saw a boy coming along with a number of wild doves caught and fastened in a wicker cage, for he was taking them to market to be sold.

Now when Francis saw them he was very sad, for they were all caught and caged, and it seemed they would never be able to fly about in the green woods any more, nor build their nests, nor give joy to all that passed by their soft voices. He could not bear to think that they would be killed.

Looking at them tenderly, he said to the boy, "I pray you, give those birds to me, and let them not fall into the hands of cruel men who would kill them." Then the boy, hearing the kindness in Francis's voice, gave them to him. And Francis took them in his arms, and they sat on his shoulders without fear whilst he talked to them.

"Oh, my little sisters, why did you let yourselves be caught? Now I will rescue you from death and make nests for you, that you may lay your eggs there, and care for your little ones as God has commanded you."

So talking, he went back along the road to where he and some of his companion Brothers were staying, the doves flying round him, and there he made nests for them.

And there, just as he had said, they laid their eggs, and one bright day in the spring the shells chipped, and the bright eyes and big beaks of the baby doves looked out asking for food.

Often Francis and the Brothers would stand quite close to the nests, watching as the mother doves fed their little ones, and the father doves flew to and fro seeking for food, or eating from the outstretched hands of the Brothers.

All day long the soft voices of the doves were heard. When the young ones were grown up and ready to fly, Francis came out and spoke to them, telling them to go now to the green woods that were their home. And as he spoke, the doves stretched their wings and flew away.

Now long, long after this, on the night that Brother Francis lay dying, as the dark shadows began to creep round the house, at the time when all birds that love daylight go to sleep, there was the sound of sweet singing, and the rush of hundreds of wings.

The brown larks, his little sisters, came flying round the house where he lay. They sang more sweetly than they had ever sung, to comfort him, and to remind him of that happy place to which he was going, where those who love God and all His creatures praise Him with great joy for evermore.

## BROTHER GILES

BY VERA E. WALKER

**I**N the days when Brother Francis was alive he gathered around him other companions who also called themselves Brothers, and wore the brown robe and the rope girdle, and sandals on their feet, and lived as he lived. One of them was named Giles.

Now Brother Giles had no home nor place to shelter him, and no money, but as he went about he worked, so that he should have enough to eat and drink, and a little to give away. Sometimes he gathered rushes by the wayside and plaited them into baskets and sold them. Sometimes he filled a great earthen jar with clear water from a distant spring and went through the streets of a little town crying, "Water, pure water; who needs water to drink?" Sometimes he would help to gather olives from the trees, or tread the purple grapes in the winepress, or help with the sowing or the harvest.

And when there was no work to be done, he would take what food grew by the way—the berries in the hedge or the few grains of wheat left on the threshing-floor—and thank God for that. Whenever he toiled in the fields or among the trees, or by the marsh where the rushes grew, or whenever he shared the food he had earned with the poor, the face of Brother Giles was lit up with great happiness.

"Blessed is he that serveth," said Brother Giles.

One morning early, Giles rose from sleep, and washed himself with water at the spring, and went into the



little church to pray. After that he went quickly to the market-place and waited for some one to give him work.

Presently a man passed by, asking for some one to climb his walnut trees and beat down the nuts. The men in the market-place shook their heads and grumbled.

"It is too far away, and the trees are hard to climb."

"I will go," said Brother Giles, "if you will give me part of the walnuts for my wage."

So the man promised, and Giles went with him to where his walnut trees grew, and it was true they were very high and dangerous to climb. But Brother Giles, saying a prayer, climbed up into the tree, and he beat so hard and so well that when he came down there were a great pile of walnuts waiting for him.

The farmer took some and left some for Brother Giles for his share. There were so many that he took off his brown robe and wrapped them in it, and, putting it on his shoulders like a sack, he carried it into the city.

In the streets of the city there were many poor people with hungry faces and sad eyes. When Giles saw them, he felt he could not sell his walnuts, he must give them away. So he opened his robe and called them to him.

The old men and women and the little children gathered round him eagerly, and handful by handful Giles gave away the walnuts that he had earned by such hard toil. Putting on his robe again, he turned away with a happy face.

"Blessed is he that serveth," said Brother Giles.

Once in the cold spring-time, Giles and some of his friends went away from the towns and villages and stayed in an old ruined church in a lonely place, where they might say their prayers. For there were many people to be prayed for, the sick who needed healing, the wicked who needed to be sorry, the weak who needed strength, and Giles knew he could help them far more by praying than by anything he could do or say. So there they stayed, and whilst they were there, the snow began to fall thickly, and it was bitterly cold and they had no food left.

Then Giles said, "Let us pray to God that He will send us help in our great need," and they prayed.

Now as they were praying, they heard the sound of footsteps in the snow, and a voice calling, "Is any one within?" There stood at the door a man, who lived not far away, and though he knew nothing, had wondered whether any one was in the old ruined church, and had come bringing bread and wine, lest any one there should be without food.

With great joy the Brothers took the food he had brought and sat down to eat it, thanking God that He had answered their prayers.

"Blessed is he that serveth," said Brother Giles. "If thou servest, thou shalt also be served."

## TRULY BROTHERS

BY ALICE M. PULLEN

IT was Jimmie's birthday, and he was seven years old. His father gave him a beautiful new spade. "There you are, son, and use it well."

"Oh, thank you, Daddy," cried Jimmie joyfully. "My spade is too small for me, and it is all bent at the edge." Then, as he swung it on to his shoulder, he began to sing :

"Father of all workers,  
Bless them all day long,  
Make them truly brothers,  
Make them brave and strong."

"Where did you hear that ?" asked his father.

"At Primary," said Jimmie. "Daddy, what's a 'truly brother' ?"

"Sorry, old man. Can't stop to tell you now," said his father, and was gone.

Jimmie turned his attention to his breakfast, and then, with sandwiches in his pocket, set off to the woods to show his friend Billie his new spade. The old one he took with him in case of need.

"What's a 'truly brother,' I wonder ?" he said to himself as he went up the lane, past the mill, the two spades over his shoulder.

The mill door was open, and the miller, white with flour, could be seen busy at his work.

Jimmie stopped and looked in. A great pile of golden corn stood just inside the door.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"I'm grinding your corn, little brother,  
I'm working for all, and for you.  
Good brothers must help one another,  
Help quickly and joyfully too,"

said the miller, and smiled at him.

"My corn?" asked Jimmie, surprised.

"Of course it's your corn, little brother,  
But you mustn't have more than you need,  
Or there won't be enough for some other,  
And that would be selfish indeed,"

said the miller, and turned back to his work again.

Jimmie watched him a little longer, and then left the mill and went along the lane, thinking hard.

"Is he a 'truly brother,' I wonder?" he said to himself.

Before long he reached the baker's, and a smell of hot, freshly baked bread greeted him. He stopped a moment to peep in at the blazing fire before the oven. The long table and the shelves were full of new, crackly loaves. The baker saw him, and called a cheery good morning.

"What are you doing?" asked Jimmie.

"I'm baking your bread, little brother,  
I'm working for all and for you.  
Good brothers must help one another,  
Help quickly and joyfully too,"

said the baker.

"But that isn't my bread," said Jimmie, surprised.

"Of course it's your bread, little brother,  
But you mustn't have more than you need,  
Or there won't be enough for some other,  
And that would be selfish indeed,"

said the baker, and went back to his oven.

Jimmie went on thoughtfully.

"Is he a 'truly brother,' I wonder?" he said to himself, and turned back into the lane.

A few minutes later he passed the carpenter's shop, and stopped to watch him sawing and hammering busily.

"What are you doing?" he asked.  
And the carpenter stopped his work to answer:

"I'm making your chairs, little brother,  
I'm working for all and for you.  
Good brothers must help one another,  
Help quickly and joyfully too."

"But they aren't my chairs," said Jimmie—"at least, I don't think so."

"Of course they're your chairs, little brother,  
But you mustn't have more than you need,  
Or there won't be enough for some other,  
And that would be selfish indeed."

"When you say good brothers must help one another, do you mean 'truly brothers'?" asked Jimmie.

The carpenter nodded and went on with his work.

Jimmie thought for a few minutes and then slowly went on his way. Before long he met a miner, with coal-black face and hands, carrying his lantern and his pick.

"Good-day, little brother," said the miner, as he passed.

"Good-day," said Jimmie. "What have you been doing?"

"I've been digging your coal, little brother,  
I've been working for all and for you.  
Good brothers must help one another,  
Help quickly and joyfully too,"

said the miner.

"But is it my coal?" asked Jimmie.

"Of course it's your coal, little brother,  
But you mustn't have more than you need,  
Or there won't be enough for some other,  
And that would be selfish indeed,"

he said, as he went on his way.

Jimmie watched him go, shouldered his spades, and then climbed the stile that led across a field to the house where Billie lived.

At the other side of the stile sat a man, his face hidden in his hands.

Jimmie stood watching him for a moment, but he did not move or speak, and Jimmie knew something was wrong.

"What is the matter?" he asked at last.

The man lifted his head, and he looked tired and sad and hungry.

"I have no work," he said. "I cannot earn any money to buy bread for my children, and they are hungry."

"What is your work?" asked Jimmie.

"I was a gardener," said the man, "but my spade is broken, and I have no money to get it mended."

Jimmie looked at his own spades—the little old one with the bent edge, and the lovely big new one that had never been used. And suddenly a little voice seemed to whisper in his thoughts:

"Of course they're your spades, little brother,  
But you mustn't have more than you need,  
Or there won't be enough for some other,  
And that would be selfish indeed."

He offered the man the little old spade with the bent edge, then drew it back again, looked lovingly at the new one, swallowed quickly, then:

"You have this one," he said quickly, and offered the man the new spade, "and I've got some sandwiches in my pocket. I expect your boys and girls are hungrier than I am. And perhaps if I took your broken spade to the carpenter, he'd make it a new handle. Perhaps the baker would give us some bread, too, for there aren't enough sandwiches."

They both said:

"Good brothers must help one another,  
Help quickly and joyfully too."

The man got up with a glad face.

"Thank you, little brother," he said.

## GIOTTO, THE SHEPHERD BOY

BY ELSIE H. SPRIGGS

ONCE upon a time, far away in Italy, there lived a shepherd boy called Giotto. His home was on the high hills, where in the spring-time the flowers made a gorgeous, coloured carpet. On the flower-decked slopes Giotto watched over his father's sheep. It was a very safe place for the sheep, so when he had seen that they had water to drink and grass to eat, he had plenty of time to himself.

Sometimes he lay on his back and looked up at the blue, blue sky, and watched the birds and the butterflies fly swiftly by. Sometimes he collected as many different flowers as he could find.

It was the colours he loved. How he wished he could be a painter and paint them. He often drew them on a piece of slate: he drew all kinds of things, birds and flowers and sheep, but he was too poor to buy any paints. "And how can I be a painter without paints?" thought Giotto.

Far down in the valley Giotto could see the fine city of Florence. He knew that the greatest painter in the world lived there. Sometimes he came to paint pictures for the count who lived in the castle close by, but Giotto had never seen him nor the lovely pictures he painted.

"If he taught me, I might be a great painter too," thought Giotto, "but when shall I ever see him?"

One day another shepherd boy came running down the hill toward Giotto, waving his hat with excitement.

"Giotto, Giotto," he called; "will you run away with



me to the city of Florence? I am tired of being only a shepherd boy. I am going to the city to get rich and live in a big house and wear fine clothes. Come with me and you will see the lovely pictures, and when we have money enough you can learn to be a painter."

Giotto's eyes shone with excitement. Suppose he did run away to the city and earn a lot of money, he could buy paints, he could be a painter.

"Oh, how lovely it would be!" he thought. Then he looked down the hillside at his father's little hut and at the sheep. Who would look after them if he went? His father was too poor to pay for a shepherd. What would happen to the sheep? His father was too busy working in the fields to take care of them.

"Come along with me to-night," said his friend.

"No," said Giotto; "I shall stay with my sheep."

"You are a stupid," said his friend. "You will never be a great man," and he walked angrily away.

The next day, when Giotto led his sheep out on the hills his friend had gone, and Giotto was more alone than ever, so he kept on making pictures in the sand and on a piece of slate.

Some months later all the shepherd folk were agog with excitement. The great painter from the city was coming to the castle to paint pictures for the count. Every one who could was going to see him, for he and his servants would be riding on splendid horses with harness of gold and silver, and waving banners, and silver trumpets. But some people had to stay at home to mind the sheep, and Giotto was one of them.

As he sat on the hillside he heard the blare of the trumpets and saw far away in the distance the prancing horses and the waving banners. He would like to have painted all the gay colours; but, instead, he took up a piece of rough slate and began to draw pictures. He drew a lamb and rubbed it out; then he drew his favourite sheep.

He was so intent on his work that he never heard two horsemen riding up the hill, nor saw them alight beside him. Then a voice said:

"This is the shepherd boy of whom I told you—the one who makes pictures in the sand and on slate."

Giotto jumped up. He knew it was the count who spoke, but he did not know who the other man was. The count took the slate from the boy's hand and gave it to his friend.

"You do not have shepherd boys in Florence who draw like that," he said.

"From Florence!" thought Giotto. "Then this was the great painter. Perhaps he would laugh at such poor drawing."

But the painter did not laugh as he looked at the sheep on the slate. "Would you like to be a painter?" he said.

"A painter!" cried Giotto. "Oh yes; but that can never be, for father is poor and I must take care of his sheep."

The great painter answered nothing, but just smiled at Giotto, and then rode away with the count.

That night, as Giotto and his father sat in the hut, a loud knock sounded at the door. It was the count and the great painter.

"Will you let the boy come with me to learn to be a painter?" said the great painter to Giotto's father.

"And I will send you one of my own shepherds to look after the sheep," said the count.

And his father let Giotto go. The next day he left his sheep and went up to the castle. On the way he saw a boy sitting by the roadside in rags. It was his friend come back from the city. Giotto ran toward him.

"Oh, how glad I am to see you!" he said. "Why are you back? Did you not like the city?"

"The city," his friend said, "it is a dreadful place. I could get no work, and I grew hungrier and hungrier, and now I have come back to mind the sheep, but perhaps no one will give me any sheep to tend."

"Of course they will," said Giotto. "I will ask the count to make you one of his shepherds."

So together they went up to the castle. And the count made one a shepherd and the other he sent away to be a painter. So Giotto rode away on a prancing

horse with gold and silver harness, with waving banners and silver trumpets, to learn to be a painter.

If you go to the city of Florence to-day, you can see his pictures. People come from all over the world to see them, and they talk of Giotto, the Great Painter, but not every one knows that once he was a little shepherd boy who stayed at home to mind his father's sheep.

Nó. 31

## BRIDE'S STOREHOUSE

BY VERA E. WALKER

A WAY in Ireland, many years ago, there lived a little girl whose name was Bride. Her hair was golden as yellow dandelions, her eyes were blue as the sky, and every one loved her. Out in the green meadows where she played the little woolly lambs would come frisking up to her and rub their heads against her hand. The little birds would fly down from the trees and perch on her shoulder and sing there.

The little children loved to play with her. But sometimes little Bride would slip away all by herself into a quiet place in the green meadow, and say prayers to Jesus Whom she loved.

"Mary's Son, my Holy Friend, talks with me," she would say, and she would run back to play with shining eyes and a happy face.

As she grew older, Bride used to help her mother in the farmhouse where she lived. Sometimes she would take the white wool that was shorn from the sheep, and wash it clean, and pull it into soft, fluffy pieces, and twist it into thread, to be woven into dresses and warm cloaks.

Often early in the morning she was away quickly into the green meadows calling to the cows, who answered her back, for they loved to be milked by her gentle hands. And then back she would go into the dairy among the great earthenware bowls of milk and wooden churns, learning to make firm cheese and golden

butter to eat. And as she worked hard at the churn she sang :

“ May He Who giveth food to all  
Come to bless my storehouse,  
The storehouse that my Lord hath blessed  
Shall be full of plenty.”

Often as she was in the dairy with the door open and the fresh wind blowing in from the green meadows where the lambs played and the birds sang, a poor woman would stop at the door and beg a little skim milk for herself and her baby.

Now Bride had a kind heart, and she could not bear to see any one hungry, and she would go quickly to one of the great bowls and take some milk, and give it away with perhaps a piece of cheese or a pat of yellow butter.

When the poor woman had gone away, Bride did not forget her. That night as she sat at supper when no one was looking, she would hide a piece of her bread instead of eating it.

“ To-morrow there may be a poor woman who wants food,” she would say. So she went to sleep that night rather hungry, but very happy, for she knew she would be able to give food to some one who wanted it the next day.

“ Mary’s Son, my Holy Friend, gave bread to the hungry,” she would say. And when she had said her prayers to Him, she fell asleep. Early in the morning at sunrise, Bride would spring out of her bed, and praise Him, and then she went off to her work again.

As she worked, sure enough Bride would see another poor woman standing outside the door, or perhaps a poor man who was crippled, and could not work, asking for food.

Then Bride would run to the little hiding-place where she kept the piece of bread she had saved from supper, and fetch it. Breaking off a piece of cheese, and filling a cup with milk, she would give it to him. As she turned away the man would say to her :

“ May the Lord bless you, Bride of the golden hair ! ”

Sometimes the mistress of the farm would come in and see what was being given away.

"There will not be enough for ourselves if you give it away," she would say. Yet when she looked round she saw that there was always plenty in Bride's storehouse, and that made her wonder. But she would not wonder any more when she heard Bride singing over her churn :

" Mary's Son, my Holy Friend,  
Comes to bless my storehouse,  
Lo ! the Prince of all the world  
Comes to bless my churning."

For in the place where Bride worked, and in the place where she loved to help those who were in need, there was always enough and to spare.

## ST. MARTIN'S CLOAK

**L**ONG, long ago, in a land many miles away, there lived a boy named Martin. When he was quite a little boy he heard the story of Jesus Christ, and made up his mind to serve and follow Him all his life. Often in the church, Martin would hear the stories of Jesus read aloud ; he loved to hear how He went about helping people and doing good ; healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, curing the lepers.

He loved to hear of that wonderful day when He shared the little loaves of bread among the great crowd of people, so that the hungry were fed, and those who were tired and sad were refreshed, and all went home full of joy. Martin loved to hear the words which Jesus spoke, read aloud. Here are some words he must often have heard :

“ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.”

So, as he grew older, he tried to be kind and good to every one he knew. If there were any poor people whom he could help, he shared his food among them.

When he was only a boy of fifteen, Martin joined the army, to please his father, who was a soldier. He was brave and kind, and his fellow-soldiers loved him, and wherever he went he used his pay to help people who were hungry or in trouble.

One day Martin had given away all the money he had, and, as he was riding through the gates of a city, a poor beggar stretched out his hand and asked him for help. The wind was bitterly cold that day, and it blew through the poor beggar's thin, ragged clothes, and brought tears to his eyes.



Martin's warm, coloured cloak was on his shoulders. Without a word he took it off, and, drawing his sword, with one swift stroke he cut the cloak in two, giving one half to the beggar and keeping half for himself. His soldier friends laughed at him as he rode through the city that day with only half a cloak over his shoulder, but Martin did not mind their laughing. His heart was glad, for he had seen the happiness in the beggar's eyes as he wrapped the warm cloth round his thin, shivering body, and went away thanking him for his kindness.

Now, that night, when Martin fell asleep, he dreamed a dream. In his dream he thought he saw our Lord Jesus Christ standing in heaven, crowned with light and wearing a robe of glory.

All around Him stood the angels, and their faces were full of wonder and astonishment. They were looking at Him—looking at something He wore over one shoulder. It was the half of a coloured soldier's cloak. And, in Martin's dream, Jesus spoke aloud and answered the question in the eyes of the angels. These are the words He said :

"It is Martin who has given Me the cloak."

Then in his heart, surely, Martin remembered the words that he had heard read in church when he was a little boy : "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

It was in the cold November days that Martin died, and at that time we remember him and think again of the story of that winter's day when Martin gave away half his cloak and rode on with a glad heart.

But sometimes when the summer days are over and autumn is here, suddenly days of hot, bright weather return again, and people call it "St. Martin's Little Summer." It is as if the weather is glad and rejoices that the corn is cut, and the apples gathered, and food is ready to be stored and shared among all of us, just as Martin was glad when he gave away his cloak.

And when we have our Harvest Festivals and send fruit and flowers to the poor and the sick we, too, rejoice, and think of the words of our Lord Jesus : "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

## RUATOKA, THE GOOD SAMARITAN

BY VERA E. WALKER

**F**AR away at the other end of the world there is a big island where brown children live. All day long in the bright sunshine they splash about in the waves on the shore, and make necklaces out of shells and seaweed, and gather bright flowers to put in their dark hair.

They live with their mothers and fathers in houses that are built on sticks driven into the ground, and they must go up by a little ladder when they go in to sleep at night. When night comes in that far-off island they pull up the ladder, for they are afraid. Some say, "The wild beasts might come up the ladder if we left it there." Others say, "An enemy with spear and club might come to kill us if we left it there." And others say, "The evil spirits that wander about at night might come and do us harm." For the brown people there do not know of our Father in heaven who loves us all, and will keep us safe at night.

Far away in the big island there was a house where lived a brown man who told the people stories of Our Father, and of His care; of how He loved them all, and wanted them to love each other.

His name was Ruatoka.

Now one dark night, when the sun had set, there came a knocking at the door of Ruatoka's house, and some of the people of the island came in. Their faces were very frightened, and their hands were shaking with fear.

"Ruatoka," they said, "far away on the path among the long grass a white man is lying. He is dying of fever."

Now when Ruatoka heard that, he took a lantern and lit it. "Come," he said, "show me where he is, and I will bring him home and care for him."

But the brown people trembled with fear, and said, "Oh no! We dare not go along the dark path among the long grass at night! The evil spirits that live among the grass would get us. We are afraid! We dare not go!" And they went away. Ruatoka was really afraid, too, for he had been brought up all his life among people who feared wicked spirits, and it was hard to be brave and remember that God would take care of him.

But he would not let the man die alone in the dark, so he took a long roll of cloth and filled a bottle with water, and made ready to start out. But before he started, he said a prayer to Our Father, whom he loved. He prayed that he might be brave, and that he might find the man who was dying of fever, and bring him safely home. Then he went out.

On and on he went in the night, over the hills and down the valleys, and along the dark path among the long grass. The birds made strange noises in the night-time, and the wind came whispering like a snake in the long grass, and the light of Ruatoka's lantern made little dark shadows all along the path like evil spirits that danced in front of him, and tried to turn him back.

But Ruatoka prayed to Our Father, whom he loved. In his heart, perhaps, he said, "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear?"

Now, as he went, he heard far away the sound of moaning. He listened. Then he made his way to the place where the sound came from, and there he found the white man lying in the grass, so ill with fever that he could not move or speak.

Ruatoka knelt and, taking his water-bottle, he poured some fresh, cool water down the man's throat. Then he wrapped the cloth round his body, and lifted the man on to his shoulders. On and on he went, through

the dark path among the long grass, where the wind whispered, and up the steep hills, and down the valleys.

The man he carried was very heavy, and Ruatoka was very tired. He began to be afraid that he was not strong enough to carry him back, and that he would die out there in the darkness. But Ruatoka prayed to Our Father, whom he loved, and said, "The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?" As he prayed, new strength came to him, and he was not afraid any more.

He went on till he saw in front of him the little house where he lived, and the white waves breaking out on the dark sea beyond the shore. He went up the little path and into the house, and there he laid the white man on his own bed, and he himself slept on the floor of the house before him.

Far away over the big island, at the other end of the world, the sun rose and turned the white waves golden, and woke up the flowers and the birds, and the brown children to come and splash on the shore. In Ruatoka's house the white man, who might have died there on the dark path among the long grass, had opened his eyes, and was beginning to be well again.

Ruatoka gave thanks to Our Father, whom he loved, because He had made him brave and strong enough to go out into the black night and bring the white man safely home.

No. 34

## LARRY'S LARK

BY FLORENCE HOATSON

LARRY was a little boy with red hair, bright blue eyes, and plenty of freckles. He lived with his granny in a little house in a busy street. The houses were all alike in Larry's street—brown brick with black chimneys. It was mostly black and brown. No green at all. No flowers. The only birds in Larry's street were sooty black sparrows. Even the pussies were thin and untidy. And the dogs seemed always hungry.

Larry had no toys except a few tins and an old top. He loved animals, but he had no pets. So he used to eat his bread and jam on the doorstep, and wish he could own something all by himself. Something of *his very own*.

One day Uncle Reuben came. Uncle Reuben lived in the country. He was a jolly uncle with twinkling eyes. In his hand he carried something wrapped up in brown paper.

"Hullo!" cried Uncle Reuben the minute he saw Larry. "See what I've brought you."

Larry ran to Uncle Reuben, who took the paper from the packet. And there was a tiny cage with a little brown bird fluttering in it. Uncle Reuben put the cage on the kitchen table. Larry gasped with delight. "For me, all for myself?" he whispered.

"All for you," said Uncle Reuben. He looked very pleased with himself. He was fond of Larry, and knew how much Larry wanted a pet of his very own.

Larry pressed his face close against the cage. The

little brown bird fluttered and seemed frightened. It uttered strange little cries. Larry looked from the bird to Uncle Reuben. "Is it *afraid* of me?" he asked, with a funny look.

Uncle Reuben laughed. "Not it," he said. "Hang it up above the window-sill, Larry, and it will soon get used to its new home."

Larry took the tiny cage in his hands. The little brown bird fluttered again. Larry could see the wild beating of its little heart. He hung it up where Uncle told him, and watched it with his chin in his hands. Granny was nearly blind as well as deaf, so she hardly noticed the little bird.

But Larry could not take his eyes from the cage. Long after Uncle Reuben had gone, he kept on looking and looking. The brown bird was still now. It stood on the wee perch with its head bent. Once or twice it raised its head and gave a bright, startled look at Larry. Then down went its head again.

The days went by, and Larry was always watching his pet. The brown bird did not flutter quite so much now, but it ate scarcely any food. Sometimes it drank a little.

But there was something it did every day, almost every hour. Larry watched it one Saturday morning and counted just how many times the brown bird did this strange thing. This was what it did. It raised itself on its perch and lifted its wings at the same time. Then it dashed itself against the bars of the cage with a shrill little cry.

One day he saw a picture in his reading book. The lesson they were having that morning in school was about birds. The picture was exactly like his brown bird at home. Only this bird was in a grassy field. Above was the blue sky. There was sunshine in the picture. And underneath was written, "This is a picture of a Lark. The Lark loves the sunshine and blue skies above the green fields."

Larry ran home and looked at his pet. The brown bird was exactly like the picture. "It's a Lark," whispered Larry. The bird raised itself on its thin



little legs and fluttered its wings. It made strange little cries.

"The Lark loves the sunshine and blue skies above the green fields," whispered Larry to himself. He said this lots of times as he watched his pet. No wonder his bird was unhappy. No wonder it wouldn't eat or drink except now and then.

This cruel cage was not its home. It was a prison. The little fluttering wings were trying to be free. The bright eyes saw only the blue skies and green fields. But there were no blue skies and green fields here.

Next day was Saturday. Larry shouted to granny and asked if he might have a penny to go on the tram for a ride. Granny gave him a penny. Then Larry went off. But he did not go alone. Under his arm, in its tiny cage, was the Lark—his little pet. When Larry got into the tram and peeped at his little friend through the chinks in the paper, he saw two bright eyes asking him a question. Larry answered that question. He said, "You will soon be happy. I am going to take you to your green fields and blue skies."

At the end of the tram ride was a green field. There was a path across that field. But it was not very green. It was rather untidy, too. Larry walked along the path up the hill. The Lark fluttered once or twice. Larry peeped through the chinks again. The bright eyes asked another question. Larry answered it this way, "All right, you pretty pet, in a minute."

Ah, this was better. Green fields as far as the eye could see. And, over all, the sunlight and the blue skies! Larry heard the sweetest singing. Far, far up in the blue he saw a brown speck. It was that speck that was singing. Larry counted many specks. They were all singing. They were Larks.

"Here we are," whispered Larry. He set the cage down on the grass. Then he tore away the wrappings. The Lark fluttered wildly. Its eyes were big with excitement. But it did not know how to get out. It just fluttered. Then Larry put in his hand. For one minute he felt a thin, warm little body with a tiny heart beating against his hand. But only for a very



little minute—perhaps only a few seconds—then away flew the Lark, up, up, up, until it, too, became a speck. Then down, down, down it came, singing, singing, singing !

Larry just looked and looked. Then he kicked the empty cage away. No other little prisoner should ever live in that cage again. He even smashed it, too. The Lark rose again. Oh, how it sang ! Larry lay listening. Then down it came once more, singing, singing !

Larry walked home thinking of the song he heard. It was a song of happiness.

And the song stayed in Larry's heart always !

No. 35

## THE BOY WHO SAW NO ANGELS

BY ALICE M. PULLEN

THE Boy lived with his sister in a little cottage high up on the mountain-side. On the hillside across the little valley was another tiny cottage where lived an old woman all alone. They could see her each day gathering sticks or fetching water from the well, feeding her hens or working in her tiny garden.

The Boy and his sister divided their work between them. While his sister washed and swept and baked, the Boy gathered sticks for the fire and fetched water from the fountain, or tramped off to the village away down in the valley to buy food for them both.

Sometimes when he came back he noticed a light in her eyes. He knew what that meant.

"Yes," she would nod to him; "I have seen the angels."

It was always she who saw them, never the Boy, even if it happened when they were both together that the light shone in her eyes; the Boy knew the angels were there, yet he saw and heard nothing.

When at dawn the glorious golden sunlight kissed the snowy mountain-peaks at the head of the valley, "Look," she would whisper; "there they are."

"I see only the sun shining on the mountain-tops," said the Boy.

When the sun was high in the heavens and the wind massed the snow-white clouds into gigantic cloud-castles behind the opposite hills, "There," she would whisper. "Can't you see them?"

But the Boy shook his head.

"I see only the clouds, but they are very beautiful," he said.

At evening, when the valley was flooded with rosy light, and the glories of the sunset were like golden gates into heaven, his sister touched his arm and pointed silently.

But the Boy shook his head.

"I see the fiery clouds of the sunset, but no angels," he said.

"I *wish* you could see them," said his sister, "or hear them. Sometimes they talk with me."

But the Boy was very happy all the same.

"I think some people can see them and some people can't," he said. "And I don't think it matters very much so long as I listen."

"But if you can't hear them, how will you know what they say?" asked his sister.

"If I have to know, perhaps God will tell me," said the Boy. "The great thing is to listen."

One day, when the Boy came in with sticks for the fire, his sister said to him:

"I shall go to the village to-day. If I am not back by sunset, you will know that I am staying the night with the farmer's wife. You will be all right alone? The angels are all round about you, even though you cannot see them."

The Boy nodded.

When the housework was done, she set off. As the Boy stood at the gate watching her go, the little cottage across the valley caught his eye. Very still and silent it lay in the sunlight. There seemed something strange about it. For a little while he stood looking, and then went back to his work. There was a large pile of wood to be chopped and stacked, and there were potatoes to dig.

As he sat over his dinner, his thoughts went to the little old woman on the opposite hill. Why, he hadn't seen her that day. That was why the little cottage looked so strangely still and silent. Perhaps she, too, had gone to the village away down in the valley.

In the afternoon he worked in the garden, but he could not forget the old woman. Every now and then he would lean on his spade and look across at the cottage. At last a movement there caught his eye. The old woman's dog was wandering restlessly about her garden. Up and down the path he went, up and down, and then round to the back of the cottage out of sight, and again up and down the path and round to the back again.

The Boy was puzzled, but there was work to be done, and then supper to get ready for his sister's return. But she did not come. She had asked him if he would mind being alone. Of course he did not mind. He remembered what she had said about the angels.

"I suppose it is because they *are* here that I do not mind," he thought to himself as, supper ended, he got ready for bed. He fell asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

He might have been asleep for a few minutes, or he might have slept for hours, when he awoke with a start. The old woman! Perhaps she was ill and all alone. He got up, and, dressing quickly, opened the door. It was a still, starry night. There was no moon. Shutting the door behind him, he went down the path and out at the gate. How should he find the way? He would make for the village when he had crossed the stream, and watch for any turning on the left that climbed towards the old woman's cottage. There must be a path.

His eyes were growing used to the soft, starry darkness. A little night breeze, cool and sweet, blew in his face. Now and then he could hear a little scutter and rustle in the woods that bordered the path, but he was not afraid. He knew it was only the little night creatures.

"I suppose God's angels are with me, though I cannot see them," he said to himself. And just at that moment he saw a little path on the left. Turning into it, he began to climb; and as the first silver gleam of dawn appeared behind his own mountain across the valley, something sprang towards him down the path. It was the old woman's dog. What a welcome it gave him,

barking and jumping round him, and then hurrying him on !

In at the gate and up the garden path they went. The door was unbolted. The Boy lifted the latch and walked in. The old woman lay with white face and eyes closed, asleep. The Boy looked round the little room, then went out, shutting the door softly behind him. First he gathered sticks in the wood behind the cottage, then he made a fire, and, fetching a pail of water from the well, put on a kettle. Then he swept and tidied the room, and when the old woman wakened the kettle was boiling and the table laid.

"It's all right," said the Boy softly, coming to the bedside and answering the question in her eyes. "I live across the valley. I didn't see you about the garden as usual, so I came to see if anything was wrong. Here's a nice cup of tea. You drink it while I feed the hens and the dog."

By the time he was back again there was a faint pink colour in her white cheeks, and she smiled a welcome at him.

"I'll have to go back now," said the Boy, "because my sister will wonder where I am. But we'll bring you some soup this afternoon, and one of us will come each day till you are better."

The old woman tried to thank him.

"That's all right," said the Boy. "I'm glad I came. Weren't you miserable and frightened all alone?"

The old woman smiled as she shook her head.

"No," she said. "I asked God to send me some one, and went to sleep. And when I woke you were there."

The Boy looked at her thoughtfully, but said nothing; then he wished her good-bye and left her. The dog took him to the gate as though to thank him.

All the way home the Boy pondered, until not far from the gate his sister met him, looking rather anxious.

"Where have you been?" she asked. "I knew you must be all right, because I knew the angels would be with you wherever you were. But where were you?"

The Boy told her.

"But how did you know she needed some one?" asked his sister. "Did an angel tell you?"

The Boy looked at her thoughtfully.

"No," he said. "The old woman asked God to send her some one. It must have been God who wakened me and sent me."

"Did you hear a voice?" asked his sister.

"No," said the Boy; "I just knew suddenly I must go. But it *must* have been God who told me to go. He showed me the way, too, and was with me all the time."

And, with eyes shining with joy, he went in to help his sister to make the soup.

No. 36

## THE PRAYER THAT WAS NOT ANSWERED

BY ALICE M. PULLEN

**I**N a few days it would be John's birthday. Mother and Margaret had made the loveliest plans. If only it would be fine !

Mother's present for John was a beautiful box of trains, and Margaret's was a signal to go with it. She had saved up for weeks and weeks to buy it for him. But that was only a small part of the birthday plans.

If it were a fine day, Mother, Margaret, and John were going to walk over the hills to the blue sea, not so very far away. They were going to bathe, and have picnic dinner on the shore. Best of all, if it were fine, Daddy was to come straight to the shore to find them in time for tea at the cottage on the cliff. Oh, if only it would be fine !

"I think," said John, "the birthday present I should like best of all would be a fine day," and he searched in his toy-cupboard for his spade and pail, his fishing-net, and his best boat, and put them all out ready.

When Margaret went to bed that night, she prayed :

"Please God, make Saturday a fine day. It's the birthday present John would like best. Amen."

"I know it will be fine," she said to her mother as she climbed into bed. "I asked God to make Grandpa better, and He did. He always answers my prayers."

Each day she and John talked of the joys Saturday would bring, bathing and paddling, digging sand-castles, and looking for seaside treasures—shells and



seaweeds and crabs and starfish. Each night she prayed for a fine day, and when they woke on Saturday morning the rain was streaming down the window-pane, and the sky was as grey as grey could be in every direction.

Mother came in to find John sitting face to the wall as black as thunder, and Margaret with her head under the bedclothes, crying as if her heart would break.

"I *asked* God to give John a fine day," she sobbed, "and He *always* answers my prayers."

"Perhaps He has sent us another answer," said Mother. "Let us see if we can find it during the day."

All through breakfast-time John refused to be comforted. Margaret dried her tears and looked at his sulky face.

"I know, John," she said, when breakfast was cleared away. "Let us move the table and the chairs out of the way and play with your new trains. I'll get my lovely big box of bricks, and we'll build stations—lots of them. We could use the halma men for people."

The black cloud on John's face began to disappear, and when Mother came in just before dinner-time, she found two very happy people, so busy with their game that they had never once thought of the sea.

As they washed for dinner, Margaret went to the window to see if there were any break in the grey clouds. But still the rain streamed down the window-pane. The shadow came back into John's face for a moment as he saw it, but it disappeared again when Margaret said :

"What fun, John! A birthday dinner! And this afternoon we'll make a tunnel for the train to go through, and then there will be a birthday tea! Daddy will be here. It will be the loveliest afternoon."

It was. John lit the birthday candles on his cake, and Margaret sang him a birthday candle song. Then Daddy cut it for him.

At bedtime, John said solemnly :

"Margaret, I think it's been the nicest birthday I have ever had."

Margaret looked thoughtful.

"I asked God for a fine day and He didn't give it to us, John," she said. "But it's been the loveliest day."

"We certainly had indoor sunshine," said Mother, "and though we can't make outdoor sunshine, the best part about indoor sunshine is that God lets us help to make it."

"Thank you, God, for *not* answering my prayer *my* way this time," prayed Margaret softly just before she climbed into bed.





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